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Japan

in

Days of Yore

Walter Dening

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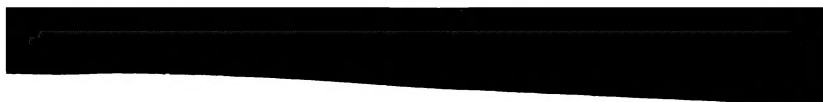














19.
Merry Christmas
to Crosby
JAPAN IN DAYS OF YORE
from
Aunt Mar.

BY

WALTER DENING




1906

TOKYO

METHODIST PUBLISHING HOUSE

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"Thou unrelenting Past!
"Strong are the barriers round thy dark domain,
"And fetters sure and fast
"Hold all that enter thy unbreathing reign.
"Far in thy realm withdrawn,
"Old empires sit in sullenness and gloom,
"And glorious ages gone
"Lie deep within the shadow of thy womb."

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.





Preface

IT is in the calm waters of ancient Japanese life that the permanent traits of national character are most clearly reflected. There is too much motion and change in the modern life of the nation to allow of anything being seen but a representation at once broken and ill-defined that is in many respects more of a caricature than a true likeness. Locked away in storehouses access to which few foreigners enjoy lie numerous treasures, literary, philosophical and ethical. These it is the aim of this work to expose to view. Some of the matter included in this volume is entirely new. Many of the tales have been altered in various respects since their first publication in magazines or Readers. It has been the object of the author to illustrate as many phases of Japanese pre-Meiji life as possible by describing how men belonging to various ranks and classes passed their days in feudal times. In many of the stories translated there are evidences

that the original authors have time and again drawn on their imaginations. Fiction undoubtedly mingles with fact, but it is fiction that is the product of Japanese brains and hence which possesses a special interest as such.

The first four tales of this collection have been issued in single volumes with illustrations, and may be bought at the Methodist Publishing House in Tōkyō.

W. D.

SECOND HIGH SCHOOL.

Sept. 12th, 1906.



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JAPAN IN DAYS OF YORE.

I.

WOUNDED PRIDE AND HOW IT WAS HEALED.

CHAPTER I.

THE breathing time afforded to the great Barons of Japan by Hidetada's uneventful administration having passed, it depended entirely on the character of Iemitsu whether or not the form of central feudal government rendered possible by Hideyoshi's conquests and actually established by Tokugawa Ieyasu should be perpetuated for any length of time. Had any deficiency of that invincibleness of spirit combined with practical sagacity, possessed in such an eminent degree by both Hideyoshi and Ieyasu, displayed itself in the character of Iemitsu, it would have borne with it a serious train of consequences. Never did the subsequent history of a nation depend more on the character of an individual than at that time.

The episode in the career of the third Tokugawa Shōgun which we are about to relate was one which left a deep impression on his mind, in that it constituted one of the crises of his life. It taught him a lesson which, if he hoped to become a worthy successor of his grandfather, he could ill

afford to leave unlearned. It helped much to develop the noble side of his nature and to add a spirit of caution and deliberateness to the courage and energy with which he found himself endowed. Thus the conduct of his follower that gave so much offence to Iemitsu proved to be of more benefit to the country at large than it often falls to the lot of any one man to be to able bestow.

In addition to its political significance the tale we are about to relate is interesting as a psychological study. It reveals to us a variety of emotional states; which are well worth our attention for their own sake, apart from the events with which they were connected and the men whom they immediately concerned. For the simple reason that what men have been they are and will be; since in the region of mind as in the arena of politics history repeats itself. Stories of this kind convey to a foreign reader a better idea of the life of old Japan than can be obtained from any other source. The two men who figure so largely in it were fine specimens of Japanese human nature—full of high culture and refinement, fearless and honest, living embodiments of that superior ethical code known as *Bushidō*, in praise of which so much has been written in this country during the past few years. There are some parts of the tale that bring out in striking contrast the difference between Occidental and Oriental ideas, and there are other parts where the kinship of human nature the world over

is vividly illustrated. There are types of Japanese human nature that are almost entirely unknown to Europeans. Lives have been passed in this country that for nobleness and refinement will bear comparison with our very highest Western models.

Abe Tada-aki, Bungo-no-Kami, was a favourite of Tokugawa Ieyasu, and to him was committed the guardianship of his grandson, Iemitsu.

As a lad Iemitsu was full of youthful spirits, but owing to the extreme deference paid to him, he was both self-willed and self-indulgent. Unaccustomed to be crossed, he lived in entire ignorance of his many defects. Most of those who surrounded him did nothing but flatter him from morning to night. So inured to this kind of treatment did he become that he grew impatient of rebuke by whomsoever administered. There were men, however, who never failed to reprove anything that seemed to them to be amiss in his behaviour, despite the unbecoming and thankless way in which such reproof was frequently received. The most noted of these were Abe Tada-aki and Okubo Hikozaemon. Iemitsu took lessons in fencing from very early days, and as a pastime he was very fond of sword exercise.

On the seventeenth of January every year, (O.C.)* the commencement of the Shōgun's fencing lessons was celebrated

* All the dates given in this story follow the Old Calendar.

by the holding of a special opening ceremony. In the year 1630 A.D., the preparations made for this ceremony were more than usually elaborate. Full of his wonted youthful spirits, and gradually having come to think that he was quite an expert swordsman, Iemitsu looked forward with great pleasure to the fencing meeting.

On the appointed day a large number of friends, retainers, and dependants assembled within the precincts of the Shōgun's castle. On a seat slightly elevated above the rest, sat the Shōgun. Opposite to him was Yagyū, Tajima-no-Kami, the famous fencing-master, and a little removed from him Orio Jiroemon and Sakurai Rokuroemon, both fencers of note. Though there were several other distinguished guests present, in those days of chivalry the fencers were second to none in popular esteem.

The ceremonies of the day commenced by the Shōgun, first, and his various followers and attendants, afterwards, worshipping the great god of Kashima and the great god of Katori. Both these divinities being patrons and lovers of war, it was deemed but proper that their blessing on the year's fencing should be invoked. A cup of *sake* having been solemnly offered to each of the deities, or rather to their pictures, which hung on the walls, a small quantity of the life-giving beverage was handed round to each of the principal personages present; who, with heads bowed low in front of the pictures of the two divinities, reverently drank the same.

After this various retainers of the Shōgun, answering to their names, came forward one by one and fenced with Iemitsu. Six of these in succession were worsted in their combat with the Shōgun. Elated with his success, Iemitsu seemed to think that, with the exception of the fencing-masters themselves, he was getting to be the first fencer in the kingdom.

Tada-aki, who was present on the occasion, looked with a feeling of extreme dissatisfaction on what was taking place. "What sycophantish young fools these fellows are!" exclaimed the Shōgun's guardian to himself. "For fear of offending their master, they allow him to win an easy victory over them in this way. With such a set of flatterers around him, there is no saying into what Iemitsu may develop."

Just as these thoughts were passing through Tada-aki's mind, Iemitsu approached and addressed him as follows:—"Ah, Bungo! I hear that you have made great progress in fencing of late, that you have become one of Yagyū's first-class pupils and have recently obtained a certificate of merit. Suppose you and I have a bout together."

"Excuse me," replied Tada-aki; "but I would rather not."

"Why not? Why not?" inquired the Shōgun. "What is your reason for refusing?"

"Please excuse me, please excuse me," reiterated Tada-aki.

The Shōgun insisted on hearing Tada-aki's reason for refusing; so the latter honestly told him as follows:—"Though

I am reluctant to have to say so, your fencing is still extremely defective. You are still but a novice at the art. I, on the other hand, having graduated in Mr. Yagyū's school, am of course a good swordsman. This being the case, you and I cannot possibly make a good match for each other, and therefore our fencing together could not but prove the most unentertaining of pastimes to you. And, more than this, I fear that were we to fence, your defeat would only engender feelings towards me which it is most undesirable you should entertain, I beg therefore to be excused."

"It is unnecessary to say so much about your great skill in fencing," replied the Shōgun, somewhat nettled by the air of superiority which Tada-aki assumed. "What you can do and what you cannot will soon be revealed by your actual performance. There is no call for so much boasting before you begin."

"Thus commanded, I cannot any longer refuse," replied Tada-aki; "but since I am not one to act the hypocrite, even in the fencing ring, I shall not play at fencing as some others have been doing, but shall set to work in real earnest, practising the art just as I have been taught it. In that case it is very probable that your Highness will be knocked over by me. I beg that should this happen you will not take it amiss."

"That goes without saying," replied the Shōgun testily. "In trials of skill the distinction between master and servant

should be lost sight of. Let's have no more parley! Come on! come on!"

Thus saying, the Shōgun seized a fencing sword and, raising it above his head, stood ready to knock Tada-aki down directly he approached him. Tada-aki, on the other hand, held his foil in readiness to receive the blow. They now went at it hammer and tongs. With the greatest coolness and adroitness Tada-aki warded off blow after blow until Iemitsu, growing more and more furious, made a tremendous thrust at his antagonist. The latter, parrying the thrust, instantly took advantage of the Shōgun's overbalanced posture to deliver a heavy backhanded blow on his ribs, which sent him reeling to the ground.

This was the cause of a great stir in the fencing yard. Iemitsu's various attendants rushed forward to help him rise. One and all expressed the hope that he was not hurt. No sound of laughter, nor word of applause at Tada-aki's feat of skill was heard. With a feeling of pity rather than envy was the victor regarded by the spectators; for all knew that this one successful stroke of Tada-aki's sword was likely to cost its owner dear. The Shōgun's rage was boiling over. With eyes emitting fire, he exclaimed—"Come on again! we will have another turn!"

"I beg to be excused from contending with your Highness any further," replied Tada-aki. "I told you before

I commenced that in the trial of skill I should not act the sycophant. I now say again that, however many times you may try, our fencing can only end in one way, namely, in your defeat; and it being so, it can do no more than create bad feeling towards me in your mind. As a subordinate of your Excellency's I beg to be excused from putting myself in the unhappy position of one who has excited his lord's anger. On this ground I respectfully decline all further contest with your Lordship."

"The idea of your talking in this way!" rejoined the Shōgun; "as though victory and defeat did not depend on luck. It is because you wish to take a mean advantage of me that you object to fence again. You think it probable that you would be beaten in another encounter."

"It is not so," replied Tada-aki. "My only reason for declining is that I do not wish to annoy you. For a servant to inflict injury on the person of his lord is considered most improper. But if you say that you do not mind my doing this and insist on my fencing again, then I have no option but to obey your command, much as it is against my inclination to do so."

"You need not go on talking in this strain," replied the Shōgun. "Come, come! let us fight again!"

They had not crossed swords more than a minute or two before Iemitsu was thrown down violently on his back.

This fall caused him a good deal of pain. His followers surrounded him and raised him from the ground. He stood still for a moment frowning with rage and then, at a loss what to say or what to do, and quite unfit to renew the contest, left the fencing yard.

After Iemitsu had retired, Kugai, Chikugo-no-Kami, the Shōgun's Lord-chamberlain, said to Tada-aki:—"You have overdone the matter. Why did you put forth the whole of your strength and display all your skill in this way? It would have been better to have dealt more leniently with the Shōgun. Having gone thus far, however, you had better do all you can to avert the natural consequence of your conduct: you had better take some steps to ward off the danger to which you have exposed yourself. Would it not be well for you to go to the Shōgun and ask him what his august pleasure is that you should do to atone for your offence?"

"Many thanks for your advice, which I know is meant kindly," replied Tada-aki; "but as I only did as I was bidden, what need is there for me to act as you propose?"

"What you say is very true," replied Chikugo-no-Kami; "but still, as the Shōgun has been put out of sorts by what has occurred, would it not be but politic for you as his vassal to go to him and ask his pardon for what has happened?"

"If I am to act in this way," replied Tada-aki, "then I might as well have done as the other fencers did—pretend to be defeated when I was not. It was because I objected to the insincerity and sycophancy displayed in their mode of acting, that when I consented to become an antagonist of the Shōgun in the fencing ring, I determined not to allow him to get the best of me. What I did was intended as a protest against the servility of the satellites who surround the Shōgun. But if I were now to own that my action was wrong, wherein should I be less servile than they? Were I to neglect to reprove the Shōgun on such occasions as these, of course he would grow up to fancy that he knows what he does not; and thus it might happen that when placed in circumstances where a thorough knowledge of fencing would be essential to his safety, his superficial acquaintance with the art might cost him his life. If allowed to go on in self-ignorance in the way he has been doing and if every device be resorted to to intensify the infatuation under which he labours, there is no saying what may be the result."

Incensed by this remark, the Lord-chamberlain took his leave of Tada-aki, and, entering Iemitsu's private apartment, immediately asked:—"What is your Lordship going to do in reference to Tada-aki?"

"Leave him as he is of course," replied the Shōgun. "Were I to dismiss him now, it would appear as though it

were done out of personal spite, and my reputation would be injured thereby. For the present it is far better to let the matter rest as it is."

The Lord-chamberlain had no sooner taken his departure than Ōkubo Hikozaemon, walking up to the spot on which Chikugo-no-Kami had left Tada-aki standing, commenced to fan him, exclaiming in the most exultant manner possible:—"Ah, a true knight! a noble knight! Well done, Bungo! I am delighted! Were it not that there are such fearless men as you left in the country, our Shōgun would not be worth a brass farthing before very long. This is a time in which people do nothing but study appearances: fine clothes and ornamented palanquins are all the rage; while the characteristics which should mark the knight are seldom seen. To meet with such a man as you then is as rare as it is gratifying. The spectacle of such a knight at such a time is enough to rejoice the departed spirit of Lord Ieyasu himself." After a slight pause, he continued:—"I should like to present something to you. What is there that I can give you?" Looking round as he said it, his eyes rested on the small cups of *sake* which had been offered to the two patron divinities. Removing one of them from the pedestal on which it stood, and handing it to Tada-aki, he said:—"Here, take this; not as presented by me, but by him whom I but represent, His Enlightened Highness Tokugawa

Ieyasu." While Tada-aki was drinking the wine out of one cup Hikozaemon emptied the contents of the other.

"Another piece of rudeness of Hikozaemon's!" remarked several of the State-councillors, on being informed of what had occurred. "Let us call him here and question him about it."

"You are summoned by the State-councillors, Mr. Ōkubo," a voice was heard to say to the old man as in a most animated way he stood conversing with Tada-aki.

"What's up now? Something has displeased them, I suppose!" muttered Hikozaemon to himself as he proceeded to obey the summons.

On his reaching the room in which the councillors were assembled, he found among others Sakai, Bingo-no-Kami, and Nagai, Shinano-no-Kami. These two addressed him as follows:—"We hear that you have been drinking and handing to others the wine offered to the gods in the Shōgun's fencing yard. Acting under whose orders did you do this?"

"Under this old man's orders," said Hikozaemon, pointing to himself.

"Was such outrageous behaviour ever heard of?" exclaimed the councillors angrily. "You are nothing short of a thief. What business had you to take what was not your own?"

"No, no!" replied the old man, not at all disconcerted by the fury of the councillors. "I have committed no

robbery. If you ask why I took the *sake*, I reply, your blindness was the cause of it. You State-councillors together with all your subordinates are as blind as bats. If you could but see a little, there would have been no need for me to have touched the *sake*, but being stone-blind, out of very pity for your forlorn condition, I felt it my duty to act as I did."

"What do you mean," asked the councillors, "by speaking of men who hold such a high position in the State as we do as blind men. Impudence, indeed! How dare you speak thus?"

"Don't excite yourselves so much. Keep cool, I pray you, while I explain my meaning to you," replied the old man. "We live in an age of luxury, self-indulgence, and ease—at a time when dancing girls are more in demand than anything else. Men who have the blood of warriors in their veins study nothing but how to utter soft, sycophantish, flattering speeches in the Shōgun's ears, hoping to receive an *inrō*,* a purse, a dagger, or a coat as a reward. When they are set to fence with him, one after another they allow themselves to be defeated in a way that is painful to behold. The Shōgun is treated as a fool and an idiot, all doing their best to hoodwink him as much

* A set of small boxes attached to the girdle. The boxes usually contain medicines and a seal.

as possible. Who can imagine disloyalty carried to greater lengths than this? When at such a time a man like Tada-aki makes his appearance and opens the Shōgun's eyes by beating him out and out at fencing, what is this but the soul of Iemitsu's illustrious grandfather, (of blessed memory), the great Ieyasu, making its influence felt in our midst? Such loyalty as we have witnessed to-day is worthy of being immortalized. It deserves to be enshrined with all that is dearest to the members of the Tokugawa family. This being the case, one would have thought that among the Councillors of State there would have been some with eyes discerning enough to see how things stand, and that such men would have been ready to applaud Bungo-no-Kami for the services he has rendered to-day. It is because no such officers were to be found that I designated you all blind men. Seeing that no such persons were forthcoming, I felt obliged to give Tada-aki the only thing that was at hand to offer, the cup of *sake* which had been presented to the god, and to express my admiration for the nobleness of his conduct. As regards the *sake* the consumption of which is the cause of so much offence to you, if I mistake not, nothing could be more pleasing to the divinity to whom it was offered than that it should be imbibed by such a brave knight as Bungo-no-Kami. God of the brave and patron of war as the divinity is, methinks that he looked with benignant

eyes on the display of courage witnessed in the Shōgun's fencing yard to-day, and that he highly approved of my honouring the author of the brave deed with a cup of the sacred beverage. Since for the most distinguished of the worshippers to partake of the offerings which have been presented to the gods is alike in accordance with ancient customs and the Divine will, what is there to complain of in my act?"

As may be supposed, these remarks were most distasteful to those to whom they were addressed; and had they proceeded from the lips of any other vassal of the Shōgun than Hikozaemon, it is not at all probable that they would have been listened to as patiently and as long as they were. There were special reasons, which will appear later on in the tale, for the deference paid to this old man even by the highest dignitaries of State, and this accounts for the manner in which even incensed councillors allowed him to have his say. Feeling that Hikozaemon had done no more than utter the truth, with faces which indicated that a strong contest was going on within them between anger and shame, the councillors dismissed the *hatamoto** from their presence.

The title of the immediate vassals of the Shōgun, to which force Hikozaemon belonged.





CHAPTER II.

The day following the events described above, Tada-aki went as usual into the Shōgun's room. But Iemitsu took no notice of him whatever throughout the whole day. Not an order did he give him to execute, not a word did he exchange with him on any subject whatever. So that Tada-aki felt like a man sitting on needles.

When this had continued day after day for the space of three weeks, Tada-aki began to consider whether he had not better do what most men were in the habit of doing when similarly placed: had he not better give out that he was ill and keep away from the Shōgun's court altogether? But this would be telling a lie, which as an honest, straightforward knight he could not make up his mind to do. No, let the matter end as it might, from the path of right he would not swerve—act the lie he never would. So, in hopes that the Shōgun's resentment would sooner or later come to an end, but if not this, then that he would be dismissed from office, Tada-aki still continued to appear at his post day after day and week after week. This went on till September of the year 1630 A.D., the year, as will be remembered, at the commencement of which the fencing bout took place.

The ninth of September was at this time kept as a public holiday. On the afternoon of that day, after having received special congratulations from his friends and dependants in the morning, it was customary for the Shōgun to walk leisurely around the Fukiage gardens in company with his followers and attendants to see the chrysanthemums, which were in full bloom at the time. On this day, then, the usual morning ceremonies being over, early in the afternoon Iemitsu set out to see the flowers. The country which, among the many poetic appellations it has received, bears the name of the "Land of Chrysanthemums," could boast even at the time of which I write of a very large number of specimens of this beautiful flower. The day was fine, one of those clear October days* when, in the words of a recent writer, "Mere quiet weather, trees and grass and sea and clouds, can make one forget that life has anything in it but rapture, can make one drink in heaven with every breath." Adorned with nature's finest ornaments, whose effect was heightened by the application of the artistic taste for the possession of which the inhabitants of Shikishima† have from time immemorial been noted, the gardens

* The ninth of September according to the old Calendar falls on October 20th according to the new. The old Calendar is still adhered to in many country places. Some villages observe both Calendars at New Year's time and have two jollifications instead of one.

† An old name for Japan, literally 'Many Islands.'

looked surpassingly lovely. As the eye of a spectator passed over the sea of beauty and gaiety which the scene presented, it rested on the Shōgun's purple tent. This tent was surrounded on all sides by chrysanthemums of various shapes and sizes and was embellished with every ornament that the cleverest devices of the foremost æsthètes of the day could invent. Thus adorned, it presented a very model of picturesqueness. Another object of attraction was the Shōgun's antique looking summer-house, built, ornamented and arranged so as to captivate and to charm the most fanciful of tastes. This summer-house contained rare specimens of lacquerware, carved utensils, curious heirlooms, and sparkled with gold and silver ornaments, scattered about with a profusion that would utterly astound the art connoisseur of modern times. Here it was that on the present occasion various refreshments were served; and here it was that there flowed from the poetic fancy of guests, full of spirit and charmed with the beauty of the scene, verse after verse; every one of which revealed in a more or less clear light its author's thoughts and feelings.

But there is no rose without its thorn, and few days however bright without something to mar their pleasantness. Among those jubilant guests sat one whose regard for his master combined with the cool, sullen, relentless resentment with which he had been treated by that master now for the space of nine months, forbade the smile which at other times

would have played across his benevolent face. Conscious of having done no wrong, but equally conscious of being viewed by the Shōgun and by numbers of his sycophantish followers as though he had, an object of aversion to his master, an object of pity or disdain to his fellow-officers, cheerless and solitary amid the gay crowd of courtiers—altogether out of keeping with the scene, a contrast in both looks and feelings to the clear sky overhead and the exuberant vivacity of all that surrounded him, sat the hero of our tale, Abe Tada-aki, Bungo-no-Kami.

Among the verses composed on this occasion which have come down to us, there is one that is said to have been written by Iemitsu himself, which runs as follows:—

“As, from the dew their life receiving,
“Fold upon fold the white flowers* grow,
“So fares he, who, upon his lord depending,
“Seeks a happy life and hoary age to know.”

Numbers of other verses were composed: among them there was one that was anonymous, which ran thus:—

“The longest life that is—
“For what shall it be courted,
“If not to be called his
“To whom we are devoted?

* The white flower here and in the second verse is the white chrysanthemum (*Shira-kiku*).

“Just as the white flower blooms for nought

“Save to gratify its lord.”

This verse took the Shōgun's fancy immensely. No sooner did he hear it than he exclaimed :—“ Ah, good, indeed ! Truth and honesty are written on the very face of it ! There are those who maintain that in poetry truth ought to be considered more than ornament. This evidently is the opinion of the composer of this verse. Whoever the author may be, I have no doubt that he or she is an honest, truth-loving person.—Whose can it be ?—As no name is affixed to it, it is not improbable that it has been composed by one of the attendants attached to the castle, or by one of the ladies of my house.”

Inquiry as to the authorship of the poem was by command of the Shōgun at once instituted, and resulted in one of his personal attendants named Ōta Kidayū coming forward and saying :—“ The writer of this verse is among the persons assembled here now.” Iemitsu was pleased to hear this, and at once gave orders that the author should be summoned.

He was, as the reader has probably conjectured by this time, no other than Tada-aki himself. Kidayū, who was a great friend of Tada-aki's, immediately went to him and said :—“ The Shōgun is delighted with your verse, and has commanded me to call you. Make good use of this opportunity for conciliating him, you will never get such another.”

Gratified by the success of his verse, Tada-aki rose, and, walking deliberately up to the spot where the Shōgun was seated, said:—"I beg to congratulate your Lordship on the success of to-day's festivities!"

The Shōgun looked as though he had been shot. Nothing could have mortified him more than to discover that the sentiment which as a sentiment he had applauded so much was entertained by a man to whom he felt such deep aversion. And to think that he should actually have given utterance in public to encomiums on the character of the writer of the verse, a man to whom he could not force himself to address a single word for the space of nine months, and to whom even now he could not find it in his heart to speak! Marred was the Shōgun's day's pleasure—its sunshine gave place to gloom—its sweetness was turned to gall.

Rising from his seat, his countenance flushed with rage, "Let the chrysanthemums be all thrown away!" shouted the Shōgun, and forthwith returned to his private apartments. Thus ended that day's festivities.

"Well, well!" said Tada-aki to himself; "the Shōgun's anger is unappeasable. There is no help for it!—The only course left open to me is to lay down my life. My life is not so valuable that I need seek to preserve it when it involves my being an annoyance to my master—I will die."

While these thoughts were passing through Tada-aki's mind, his intimate friend Kidayū was watching him closely. By the rapid changes which Tada-aki's features were undergoing, Kidayū perceived that serious resolutions were being made, resolutions which, if not checked in the process of formation, might lead to his friend's death. And so, suddenly going up to him, he aroused him from his reverie thus:—"Bungo! By your looks, you seem to be resolving something serious. Do nothing hurriedly. Your loyalty and faithfulness are well known to me, and I shall take the first opportunity of convincing the Shōgun that he has wronged you."

"That your intentions are excellent," replied Tada-aki, "and that what you say is dictated by your regard for me, I do not question; but 'tis no use—the Shōgun will never care for me again. The very sight of me is distasteful to him. There is no object in my dragging out existence under such circumstances. Life is not worth living situated as I am."

Here Kidayū cast his eyes around to see if any one was listening, and perceiving that no one was near enough to hear what was said, replied:—"If the Shōgun's feelings towards you were absolutely incapable of being changed, long before this you would have been degraded from office or ordered to commit suicide. It is because Iemitsu knows that you have been wronged by him, that he takes no active measures to punish you."

Kidayū's surmises were correct. A struggle between his pride and his sense of right was going on in Iemitsu's mind. To acknowledge himself in the wrong after so many months of proud reserve, was very hard to one so unaccustomed to be crossed as the Shōgun. Iemitsu's heart seemed proof against all attempts to soften it. Shut up within its own fortifications, his sullenness seemed to be absolutely unassailable. But there lived in close contact with the Shōgun an old man who was specially skilled in treating such fits of morosity as that from which Iemitsu was suffering, and who, by a rare combination of shrewdness and courage, seldom failed to effect a cure. How he fared in the present instance will presently be seen.

In the meanwhile, our story returns to Tada-aki. "Very good," said this knight to Kidayū; "I will leave the matter with you." Thus assured, Kidayū parted from his friend; and Tada-aki made his way to his own home in Ogawa-machi.

On reaching his house, Tada-aki was met at the door by his various dependants and councillors. Addressing Hirata Dan-emon, his chief councillor, he said—"Let the drawing-room be put in order. Deck it out with chrysanthemums; and let the pictures of Amida be hung on the walls."

Dan-emon wondered what was going to happen, but as his master did not seem to be in a communicative mood, he thought it best not to question him on the matter.

Tada-aki's wife came out to meet her husband. Seeing in an instant that something was amiss, "My lord looks ill," she exclaimed. "Shall I send for a doctor?"

"There is nothing amiss with my body," replied Tada-aki, "but there is something that concerns my position in the world; but—see that none of the girls approach this room; you too must retire."

"Being a woman," said Tada-aki's wife,* "of course it is not to be supposed that you would confer with me on any subject; but, as you know, my father, being an old man, is not without experience in most matters. If there is anything on your mind on which you would like to take counsel with another, he shall be called." Matsudaira, Tamba-no-Kami, was the person to whom she referred.

"Thanks for your kindness," replied Tada-aki, "but there is no need to call Tamba-no-Kami—I shall be obliged by your withdrawing."

This conversation between Tada-aki and his wife differs from anything that would be likely to take place among Westerns. But it is a fair specimen of the way in which the etiquette of the age required a high born Japanese knight to treat his spouse. She was regarded more as a guest than a wife.

* Her name is not given. It is seldom that we find in either Chinese or Japanese records the names of women. They are usually spoken of as the wife, mother, or daughter, as the case may be, of——.

She seldom ventured to inquire minutely into any of her lord's affairs, much less to give him advice thereon. Thus the bold *samurai* of ancient Japan differed in an important respect from the brave cavalier of ancient Europe. The Japanese knight had no consort whom education, general enlightenment, and social position had rendered a fitting companion at all times and not infrequently a wise counsellor. No such adoring words as Bulwer Lytton, with so much truth, as well as effect, represents Rienzi to have addressed to his beloved Nina, were ever uttered by any Japanese knight to his Oume or Ofusa. No such scene as the following can be imagined as taking place between an ancient Japanese hero and his spouse:—

“ Well, my beautiful, you have acted as ever kindly and nobly. Let us to other themes. I am in danger.’

‘ Danger!’ echoed Nina, turning pale.

‘ Why, the word must not appal you; you have a spirit like mine, that scorns fear; and for that reason, Nina, in all Rome you are my only confidant. It is not only to gladden me with thy beauty, but to cheer me with thy counsel, to support me with thy valour, that heaven gave me thee as a helpmate.”*

Or, to take an instance from more ancient times, in the case of Brutus we have a man who, like Tada-aki, had a great secret which he was trying to hide from his wife. How

* *Vide* Rienzi, by Lord Lytton.

boldly and nobly did Portia assert her claim to know that secret! and how readily did Brutus admit the justness of this claim! Shakespeare is giving us no mere fanciful picture of a Roman matron, but describes her as history has painted her to us, when he represents the wife of Brutus as one accustomed to live on terms of strict equality with her husband:—

Portia. Within the bond of marriage, tell me, Brutus,
Is it excepted, I shall know no secrets
That appertain to you? Am I yourself
But, as it were, in sort or limitation;
To keep with you at meals, comfort your bed,
And talk to you sometimes? Dwell I but in the suburbs
Of your good pleasure? If it be no more,
Portia is Brutus' harlot, not his wife.

Brutus. You are my true and honourable wife,
As dear to me, as are the ruddy drops
That visit my sad heart.

Portia. If this were true, then I should know this secret,
I am a woman; but, withal,
A woman that lord Brutus took to wife;
I grant I am a woman; but withal,
A woman well-reputed,—Cato's daughter.
Think you, I am no stronger than my sex,
Being so father'd and so husbanded?
Tell me your counsels, I will not disclose them;
I have made strong proof of my constancy,
Giving myself a voluntary wound
Here, in the thigh: can I bear that with patience,
And not my husband's secrets?

Brutus. O ye gods,
Render me worthy of this noble wife!"

We have only to contrast such pictures as these with what we read of the relations of the wives of high born *samurai* to their husbands to see how enormous is the difference between the wife of the West and that of the East. The only approach to the assertion of woman's rights displayed among the ancient Japanese and Chinese appears in the stern authority exercised by certain mothers over their sons. This is very different in character from the influence of the Western wife over her husband. The Japanese lady lived and to some extent still lives in a different world from her husband—not merely on terms of inequality but with only faint approaches to anything like familiarity. This fact accounts in a large measure for those acts of the Japanese knight for which no parallel can be found in the West. Before he went out to battle or calmly and deliberately committed suicide in his own house the ancient *samurai* had not to contend with any of those feelings with which a Western soldier had to struggle when going to the battle-field. The softer side of the Japanese *samurai's* nature cannot be said to have been altogether uncultivated, but the forces and influences wielded by a woman of intelligence, education and strength of character, who from morning to night lives on terms of equality with her husband, never having been brought to play on his heart, he could sit in his drawing room and, amid a brilliant assembly of invited

guests, or quite alone, as the case might be, without a tear and without change of countenance, commit suicide. This was courage, and perhaps courage unsurpassed anywhere, but it was courage of the stoical type—courage that involved a suppression almost amounting to extinction of those fine, tender feelings with which most men find themselves endowed.

I do not think that any one who is versed in Japanese history would assert that there were no women in Japan at the time of which I write worthy of the full confidence of their husbands. Women like the mothers of some of the forty-seven *ronin* could have been trusted with dangerous secrets without betraying any feminine weakness. The mother of Chikamatsu Yukishige gently reproved her son for not informing her of his design against Kira Nagayoshi and then addressed him as follows:—"I am very old and feeble. Any morning or night I may be gone. And now it does my heart good to hear that you are laying down your life in the discharge of those duties which loyalty to our late lord demands. I rejoice that your name will be enrolled among the faithful who from ancient times have sacrificed their lives in a similar cause. Why should I mourn over such an event? My only regret is that I have not known of it before. Hitherto I have not looked on you as one who was cherishing such a noble ambition in his mind, and therefore I have not treated you with the profound respect with which I now regard you."

Shortly after this noble woman was found lying in a pool of blood. She had died by her own hand, and inscribed on a piece of paper that lay by her side were these words, "As you make the existence of an old woman like myself a reason for not exerting yourself to the full in a righteous cause, I die, and leave you to serve your native province by killing the enemy of your lord. I pass on before you and your brave associates to the world of spirits, not caring to be behind you."

Again, when Sugino Harafusa's mother found that she was the cause of her son's not joining Oishi Yoshio's band, she killed herself by biting her tongue and left by her side the following lines for her son's perusal: "You make my age an excuse for doing what is neither filial nor loyal. In order that your mind may be thoroughly and undividedly set on carrying out what has now become the great purpose of your life, I part from you. I charge you henceforth to be diligent in showing yourself to be no less loyal than filial."

The mother of Hara Gōemon died in the same way; leaving among other admonitions the following for her son's guidance: "There are times when filial piety and faithfulness to a lord are incompatible, when the former has to give place to the latter. If you know that you have an enemy, then you ought not to know that you have a mother.....I

very much fear that this indecision of yours, if carried much further, will cast a blot on our name and sully the reputation which our ancestors have bequeathed to us. To prevent all this, I die. In the land of shades I shall meet with our late lord. Henceforth regard Kira Yoshinaga* as the enemy of your mother as well as of your lord."

The tale of these three mothers shows very plainly that there were many women as well as men in days gone by to whom life was only valuable when its preservation involved no disgrace. As among the ancient Romans so among the Japanese suicide was not only not associated with insanity or want of moral courage to face the difficulties of life, it was regarded as highly honourable ; in fact, it was considered as the only course to which under certain circumstances a brave, and at the same time a conscientious, man or woman could resort. These mothers were of opinion that if they remained alive the thought of them might unnerve the arms of the three brave knights who were to execute vengeance upon Kira Yoshinaga ; and so they all died by their own hands. To live and be a hindrance to the progress and success of the cause that they felt to be so sacred—this they could not endure. So permeated were they with the spirit of loyalty to their rulers, of faithfulness to their supporters, that life no longer had any charms

* Yoshinaga, and not Yoshihide, is the correct reading of this name.

for them while wrongs committed against their benefactors remained undressed and the reproach they had suffered in consequence unremoved. Though custom forbade women to join in the battle of vengeance, except under certain special circumstances, it did not forbid their showing that they were inspired by that cool courage and disregard of life which was in those days in the case of such good swordsmen as the forty-seven *rōnin* a sure guarantee of success. As an illustration of the sentiment which actuated these three and many other women we may quote the words of Mencius:—"I like fish; and I also like bears' feet. If I am unable to obtain both, I will let the fish go, and take the bears' feet. So I like life; and I also like righteousness. If I cannot keep the two together, I will let life go, and choose righteousness.

"I like life indeed, but there is that which I like more than life; and therefore I will not consent to hold it in any but an honourable way. I dislike death indeed but there is that which I dislike more than death; and therefore there are occasions when I will not avoid calamity (that may cause death).

"If among the things which a man likes there were nothing which he liked more than life, why should he not use all available means to preserve it?

"If among the things which a man dislikes there were nothing which he disliked more than death, why should he not

do everything to avoid calamity (that might occasion death)?

“(But as things are) there are cases when by a certain course men might preserve life, and yet they do not resort to that course; and when by performing certain things they might avoid the calamity that occasions death, and yet they do not perform them.

“Therefore men have that which they like more than life and that which they dislike more than death.”*

But to return to our tale, Tada-aki's wife saw that it was useless to attempt to argue with her husband, so immediately leaving the room, she scribbled a letter to her father, who lived near Gofuku-bashi, telling him how things stood, and urging him to come to the house at once; which letter was despatched by one of her female attendants.

In the meanwhile, Tada-aki having given strict orders that no one was to approach the room which he occupied, the preparations necessary for the dire act which he had resolved to commit had to be made by himself. Deliberately did the knight rise from his seat, kindle a light, and set fire to the two burners which stood in front of the pictures of Amida; then, after spreading two red rugs, intended to prevent the blood from injuring the mats, he put on a suit of white clothes, and over these his

* The original of this passage is very fine. It is given in full in my *Wago Eiyaku*, published by the Sanseidō.

hempen dress of ceremony; after which, sitting down with his face towards the Shōgun's castle, and placing his dirk by his side ready for use, he soliloquized thus:—"Though from the depth of my heart I am conscious of no disloyalty of any kind, yet, owing to some occult cause,* I have been destined to offend my lord. Well is it said, 'Where the water is clear, no fish are found—where the heart is upright, friends are few.'† I have done my very best to serve my master, but since the beginning of the year, without any real cause for it, he has looked upon me with aversion. To live when my life is no longer a source of pleasure to my lord would be a breach of loyalty; and so I will die, and thus from the land of shades shall my plea for forgiveness reach my master's ears. In reception of large emoluments, and yet unable to serve the house which has bestowed them—such is the unhappy lot of Abe Tada-aki!"

* *Innen*: something connected with a previous state of existence which determines what takes place in this life. Without actual belief in the doctrine of transmigration, it was customary in those days to speak of events whose origin was mysterious as having affinity or relation to something that took place in a previous life, on the principle that to certain minds an inadequate or unsatisfactory reason for the occurrence of an event seems better than no reason at all.

† The allusion is somewhat obscure. The meaning seems to be that just as very clear water is marked by the comparative absence of fish, so strict integrity is not practised by many. The path of uprightness being trodden by few, he that walks in it must necessarily become unpopular.

He paused ; and was about to commit the last dread act, when the sliding doors of the drawingroom were suddenly thrown back, and in rushed Hirata Dan-emon. Seeing in an instant what was contemplated, Dan-emon grasped his master's arm and, wrenching the dirk from his hand, exclaimed :—
“Are you mad that you thus attempt to commit suicide ?”

“Don't excite yourself !” replied Tada-aki. “I am not mad. There is a reason for what I am doing, which, if you will listen quietly, I will state to you.”

Here Tada-aki related to Dan-emon in detail all that had happened. “And,” said he, “had it not been for the presence of Kidayū, and that I was afraid of soiling the mats of the Shōgun's summer-house with my blood, I should have committed suicide immediately after this afternoon's incident in the very house in which it occurred.”

Having concluded his story, Tada-aki sprang at Dan-emon and attempted to regain possession of the deadly weapon. But the latter was no less determined than his master, and though very old, being a powerful man, he held his own against Tada-aki for some little time, but, fearing that he might ultimately be overcome, he exclaimed :—
“Hold ! hold ! and listen to what I have to say. If you are determined to die, don't do it in this underhand way. You know that it is but right that you should bid farewell to your mother before committing suicide. If I were to allow you to

die after this fashion, I should be censured severely by your mother for not having informed her of what is taking place."

"That is all very true," replied Tada-aki. "I am aware that what I purpose doing is not altogether filial; but I console myself with the thought that this breach of filial piety may be atoned for in the land of shades. If, however, you object, and are determined to prevent my putting an end to myself without acquainting my mother with my purpose, then let her be summoned."

The mother was called, and with her Tada-aki's wife and various other members of the family entered the drawing-room. The women commenced to weep and to beseech Tada-aki not to be so inconsiderate as to kill himself in the way he proposed.

Tada-aki was a man who, while, as stated above, treating his wife with all the coldness that the etiquette of those days required, had one of the tenderest of hearts, and being specially fond of his mother, was entirely unnerved by what took place, and brushed away a manly tear that, try as he would, he was unable to suppress.

"From whom did you receive all that you possess, and how did you become what you are?" asked the mother. "Am I not the source of it all? Had it not been for my care, would you have been alive to-day? And, now, ignoring all this, you purpose killing yourself! The very essence of

self-will, indeed! Was ever the like heard of before? Had your father been alive, of course you would not have dared to act in this way. Because I am a woman you think that you can afford to treat me with contempt. What do you mean by resolving to inflict wounds on the body that you received from me, without informing me of your purpose?"

It was the teaching of Confucianism that, since the body of a child was received whole from its parent at birth, it was but proper that it should be given back to that parent at death without any marks of violence on it. "Spread out my hands and my feet," said Sōshi, when about to die, "and see how entire they are. In fear and trembling, as though walking on the edge of a precipice or on thin ice, have I passed my days. Now I know that I have escaped the dangers of life unscathed."* The *Kōkyō* contains the following passage:—"The body in all its parts, even to the hair and skin, has been received from parents. To beware of injuring the body in any way constitutes the first element of filial piety."

With these sentiments was the mother of Tada-aki actuated, and thus proceeded:—"If there is an adequate reason

* The dangers referred to are those connected with injuring the body. His great anxiety was to deliver an unmutated body to his mother.

for your dying by your own hand, then your mother is not so deficient in the warrior spirit as to stand in your way even for an instant. Yea, more, should necessity demand it, she would think nothing of laying down her own life with that of her son's. Nor would even the total ruin of the house of Abe be allowed to weigh with her for an instant, did the observance of the just and the right necessarily involve such a calamity."

"And I, too," interposed Tada-aki's wife, "being the wife of a knight, have resolved to die with my lord, if he is bent on putting an end to himself."

What the honourable ladies of the house have said is most right and proper, "remarked Dan-emon; "and as for this old Hirata, having been for the space of sixty-eight years in the receipt of all kinds of benefits from the house of Abe, if matters have come to such a crisis that its lord must needs die by his own hand, he will not be the last to follow his master to the grave."

In the midst of all this, three new arrivals came bouncing into the room; being no other than Tada-aki's father-in-law, Matsudaira, Tamba-no-Kami; a relation, Toda Sakyō, and Ōkubo Hikozaemon.

The visitors made inquiries of Tada-aki as to the meaning of all that was taking place, and the latter related to them what has been already given.

When Tada-aki's statement was finished, before either of the three visitors could reply to it, the mother interposed:—"What you say is perfectly true; but still, having done nothing wrong, and your present state of distress proceeding from the Shōgun's resentment alone, there is no reason why you should kill yourself in such a hurry. In acting thus, you would not be dealing fairly with the name you have inherited and the house to which you belong. The house of Abe has not been established without hard fighting. By days and nights of toil, piece by piece and little by little, have our property and our reputation increased till we have attained our present position. It would not be right for you to bring ruin on your house in the way you propose. What I would suggest is that you wait three years longer as you are. If, at the end of that time, the Shōgun's resentment is not appeased, then we will all die together. Bear patiently this delay for the sake of the gratification that it will afford your mother. If you act thus you will, at the expiration of that period, have the satisfaction of dying no less filial as a son than loyal as a servant."

Here they all commenced to remonstrate with Tada-aki. Hikozaemon spoke as follows:—"Ah, a brave knight! a brave knight, indeed!—ready to die rather than live to be an annoyance to your lord! But, nevertheless, there is reason in what your mother and your father-in-law have been saying.

There can be no harm in bearing the burden of existence three years longer; and, in that case you will die with the satisfaction of having obeyed your mother. I have no right whatever to interfere in this matter; but it happened just now that, as I was chatting with Tamba-no-Kami in his house, a letter was handed to him. I noticed that he changed countenance as he read it. On inquiry I found out what was occurring and came here as fast as possible, being one, you know, that could not possibly allow such a matter as this to go as it would. My advice is that you attend the Shōgun's court as usual; that you harden your heart as steel, making up your mind that neither his silence nor his cold looks shall influence you one whit—that you serve the appointed time in his presence, treat you as he may. In the meanwhile, I will watch my opportunity for stating your case to Iemitsu."

Deeply impressed by the arguments of one so entirely disinterested as Hikozaemon, Tada-aki agreed to act on his mother's advice and defer his death for three years. On this decision being announced, the party dispersed.





CHAPTER III.

Hikozaemon now continually watched for an opportunity of bringing up Tada-aki's case before the Shōgun. Though so headstrong, overbearing, and regardless of consequences after having commenced to take action, Hikozaemon was a man that never defeated his ends by proceeding in a precipitately hasty manner. He never did a thing out of season : carefully did he watch for a suitable occasion ; patiently did he await its arrival before moving a finger.

It was in March, A. D. 1631, that the old man, when paying his respects to the Shōgun, noticed a weeping cherry-tree about three feet in length planted in a beautifully ornamented Chinese earthenware pot. Around the large saucer in which the pot stood there were some transparently white stones. The tree itself was as fine a specimen of the dwarfed cherry as was ever seen. It had eighty-seven branches, was well covered with leaves, and in full bloom.

"Good morning, Hikozaemon!" said the Shōgun. "Glad to see you!—Hale old man that you are!—Don't you take cold such weather as this?"

"Thank you, my Lord," replied Hikozaemon, "no ; this old man is not like a great many others, susceptible to every change of temperature. He neither wears heavy clothes in

winter nor strips himself naked in summer. He eats three good meals a day. He gets up at four in the morning and goes to bed at twelve at night. He does not give way to dissipation. The consequence is that he has an iron constitution which can stand anything. The only cause for regret is that the doctors can never make a living out of such a one as he."

"To be sure! to be sure!" repeated Iemitsu, laughing. "Careful old man that you are, I have no doubt you hardly know what illness is! Well, now, what do you think of this cherry-tree?"

"A very fine tree, my Lord, a very fine tree! I suppose you would not make me a present of it?"

"A pretty bold request, I must say!" exclaimed the Shōgun. "It is because you are an old man who does not know the difference between one thing and another and with no special liking for any one thing in particular, that you venture to ask for such a rare tree as this. I will give you anything else that you may wish for, but this tree I cannot spare."

"I do not care for anything else, replied Hikozaemon." "It is because this tree is so rare that I wish to possess it. I want to take it home and put it in my room. It will be a solace to me in my old age."

"No, no!" replied the Shōgun; "I cannot part with it; so it is no use pressing the matter."

"Then" rejoined Hikozaemon, "*this* is what I will do with it"—Suiting the action to the word, he took up the pot in which the tree stood; dashed it violently to the ground, and smashed it to bits, breaking the tree, and scattering the lovely blossoms to the four winds. As he did it, the old man laughed a loud hollow laugh, and danced about as though he had suddenly gone out of his mind.

The attendants on the Shōgun were utterly taken aback by this proceeding. Hikozaemon even when in his ordinary moods, was not a man that they dared interfere with. He had almost unbounded liberty to do as he pleased in the Shōgun's presence, no one but Iemitsu himself ever venturing to cross him. Hence it was out of the question their doing anything now; so they looked aghast, until the Shōgun broke the silence with:—

"You old rascal! Are you in your dotage that you act in this mad way? What do you mean by it?"

"No, no;" replied Hikozaemon: "I am no madman. The cherry-tree is a very pleasant object to look at, I have no doubt. But if I cannot possess it, then I had rather not have to look at it. So I have put it out of sight."

"Selfishness, indeed!" rejoined the Shōgun. "Because you cannot see a thing yourself, not to wish anyone else to do so! What next shall we hear? I pardon the insult offered me in *you*, though I would not do so in any one else; but you are to leave my presence at once."

"Leave the Shōgun's presence! Leave the Shōgun's presence!" reiterated attendant after attendant.

"Noisy young lords that you are!—keep quiet, will you;" retorted the old man. "I am not going to leave the Shōgun's presence for you or any one else." Then, turning to Iemitsu, he inquired:—"Which do you most esteem, trees or men? Do you think that this tree is worthy of being compared to a man like myself. This old man Hikozaemon has done some good service in his time. When only fifteen years of age in the Nagashino war he led the van which attacked the enemy, and had the honour of carrying off the first head. And then in the fifth year of the Keichō era (A. D. 1600), in the battle of Aonogahara, he defended the head-quarters of your grandfather Ieyasu, saving him from the destruction with which he was threatened. Then in the first year of the Genwa period (A. D. 1615), Ieyasu's life was again endangered by a mine of powder that had been laid by Sanada. It was Hikozaemon that rescued him, and it was through him that he escaped to Nara. Subsequent to this, when he took refuge in a Beniya,* at Ibaraki, I stood by your grandfather's horse and preserved him from harm. On account of these things it was that Lord Ieyasu directed me to reprove both his son and grandson when they did anything wrong. I am sorry to have to say so, but it seems to me

* A shop where rouge is sold.

that you value things more than men. For the sake of this tree, you would banish from your presence a man who has rendered such services as I. As long as a Shōgun acts thus, how is it possible that he can govern the country in a satisfactory manner? It was not I who injured your tree, but your grandfather acting through me. I was but the agent that executed the business; he it was who ordered it."

"I see what you mean", replied the Shōgun. "I have been in the wrong. One who is at the head of affairs, who is looked up to by all, gradually and imperceptibly gets into an extravagant way of living. I have undoubtedly often been guilty of things of this kind. One who occupies such a conspicuous position in the state as I ought to be most careful how he acts, as the saying goes:—'Though the profit accruing from a trifling virtuous act may be hardly perceptible, such an act is not to be left unperformed on that account: and though the trouble that results from a small evil action amounts to very little, such an action ought not to be committed on that account'. There is no knowing to what proportions small imperfections of conduct may grow, and therefore all such should be nipped in the bud. I hope therefore that without the slightest reserve you will reprove what you see amiss in me."

Hikozaemon, bowing his head low to the ground, replied:—"If you are of this mind, then I have something

to say to you. If you value men more than things, and are determined to do all that lies in your power to procure and to keep when procured men of sterling worth to administer affairs, then I wish to know how it is that a man whose father and grandfather spent their lives in the service of your house has for the space of fifteen months been treated as though he had committed some crime? I refer to no other than Abe Bungo."

"Bungo hates me," rejoined the Shōgun. "If I say that a thing is right, he always says that it is wrong. He opposes me for opposition's sake. Then, last year, three times he beat me at fencing, for nothing else but to vent his spite on me."

"It is this especially that I wish to speak about," answered Hikozaemon. "For a man to hear his actions applauded is always gratifying. And when a person of very high rank is concerned, then in his court of course virtue and vice may be made to depend on what is pleasing or displeasing to him: thus his will may become the criterion of right and wrong. And in this way it often happens that the man whom it is the one object of his followers to please is deceived into thinking that what his subordinates pronounce to be right because it is pleasing to him is actually so. Amid a host of flatterers there stands Bungo, faithful and upright, always ready to tell you the honest truth about

everything. Bungo has deplored the way in which those who surround you have striven to please rather than to speak the truth. What he did in the fencing ring was done simply to show his disgust at the servility and sycophancy of your courtiers. Your opposing such a man as this and shunning his society, tends to increase the servility and insincerity of your followers."

Iemitsu, blushing slightly, replied:—"You have hit me hard. I acknowledge the truth of what you say. Bungo is, as you represent, a faithful man. But after having slighted him all this time, I should find it very hard to break the silence now."

"If you are conscious of having done what is wrong," replied Hikozaemon, "there should be no reluctance to take the necessary steps to set the matter to rights. Is it not somewhat childish to say that you feel ashamed to speak to the man whom you have slighted so long?"

"It may be so," replied the Shōgun. "But, however, I will act on your advice and take the first good opportunity that offers itself of speaking to Bungo. I cannot of course approach him in an abrupt manner; but I have no doubt that before long something will give me an opportunity of speaking to him, so you can set your mind at rest on the subject."

Hikozaemon saw that it would not be wise to press the matter further; so, taking leave of Iemitsu, he went at once

to Tada-aki's house and related to him all that had occurred. The latter was very much gratified by the news, and found the daily task of serving the Shōgun in silence much easier now that there was a reasonable hope that the uncomfortable life which he had been leading so long would terminate happily.

The reader will have been struck with the unreasonableness of Hikozaemon's words and actions on this occasion. The act of injuring the tree was an imitation of numerous other acts of retainers and ministers of state recorded in Chinese and Japanese history. The personal liberty enjoyed by modern monarchs and rulers was in this country as well as elsewhere considerably curtailed in feudal times by the presence of subordinates who looked upon it as their duty to suppress every tendency to voluptuousness of any kind. That the presence of such men in a state or a baron's domain constituted a wholesome check on its rulers is unquestionable. At the same time the lives of many a monarch, many a shōgun and many a baron, were rendered absolutely miserable by the habitual curtailment of their pleasures and the severe reproof of acts that were quite harmless. And many a precious work of art, many a rare specimen of nature, shared the fate of Iemitsu's cherry-tree at the hands of some loyal servant who, in his zeal to prevent its possessor from becoming a mere voluptuary, did not hesitate to commit acts for which in modern days he would be fined or imprisoned.

A similar story to the above is related of Ieyasu's son Yorinobu. Telescopes were introduced into Japan in Ieyasu's time. Ieyasu, buying one, made a present of it to his son Yorinobu. Yorinobu was delighted with the gift. From the tower of his castle in Kii he used to spy at everything that took place in the vicinity. As his retainers went in and out, he would look at their costumes and their crests; he took note even of the cast of their countenances, their manner of walking, and various other particulars. One day a number of friends had come by invitation to look through the telescope, and had been greatly amused by all that it had enabled them to see. On the evening of that day Andō Tatewaki, one of Yorinobu's chief retainers, happening to come in, Yorinobu immediately began to talk about his telescope, and to recount some of the amusing scenes in the precincts of the castle which it had revealed. "May I have a look at it"? asked Tatewaki.

"Certainly"; replied Yorinobu immediately sending for the telescope.

Tatewaki took the instrument into an adjoining room and smashed it to bits. Subsequently he justified this action in the following terms:—"Like many other things, telescopes are good if used in a proper manner; not otherwise. When they are employed for spying out people's weaknesses and imperfections, they are put to an improper use. Supposing

that Yorinobu's retainers learn that their master is in the habit of looking down on them when they pass certain places, they will not care to walk along the roads that are exposed to the gaze of their lord; and in this way a great deal of inconvenience and bad feeling will be caused. No person even in the higher ranks of life always acts just as he should; but when we come to the lower ranks, all kinds of improprieties are quite common. There is nobody who cares to have grand people spying at him as he passes along the road in his careless and oftentimes frolicsome fashion. It does not do for people of rank to be looking at that part of a man's demeanour which it is not intended that they should see. If Yorinobu does this, persons who have hitherto served him well, on account of some trivial impropriety, will be suspected by him and seem to be no longer worthy of his confidence. Certain wise men in China, in order that they might not see the little faults and defects of the lower orders, put a special covering on their heads when they went abroad. All who aim at governing a country must cultivate the feeling which led these sages to act in this way."

Though this form of iconoclasm was not without its noble aspects, it cannot be denied that it contained elements of unreality almost amounting to hypocrisy. The object of the zealots of whom I am now writing was to preserve in time of peace the moral fibre, the circumspectness, the devotion

to duty which are the special characteristics of a time of war. But in attempting to bring this about, they were attempting an impossibility. That the appearance of distress should be put on when no distress is felt, that men should act in time of peace with all the carefulness and be subject to all the strict discipline of a time of war is in the case of all but those who are under direct military control something that it is unreasonable to expect. The motives of such men as Hikozaemon and Tatewaki were excellent, but the means to which they frequently resorted were not merely injudicious, they were an absolute transgression of the law of right.

The instance with which we are now concerned, however, is not without its redeeming features. Hikozaemon seems to have waited for a considerable time for a favourable opportunity of bringing up Tada-aki's case to Iemitsu. Nothing very promising offered itself. The Shōgun had to be worked into one of his humble moods—had to be made to acknowledge that he was in the wrong on some question on which he had pronounced an opinion, or in some action which he had performed. Hikozaemon, knowing that he had rendered great services to the family, thought that if he could arouse the Shōgun's anger against himself, and lead him to deal somewhat roughly with him, that this would afford a good opportunity for the setting forth of all he had done for the family, which would have the effect of softening Iemitsu's

heart towards him and of making him ready to please him in almost anything. The set of feelings which all this was calculated to produce would, Hikozaemon thought, be well adapted to lead Iemitsu to give a favourable hearing to Tada-aki's case, and so much the more so as Tada-aki and his ancestors had also rendered great services to the Tokugawa house. Unwarrantable and arbitrary, then, as Hikozaemon's mode of procedure on this occasion strikes one as being, there is much in it that displays a rare knowledge of the laws which govern the play of emotions, which shows an exceptional insight into the transitions that feelings occasionally undergo. With no psychological treatises to guide them, it is astonishing how well such men as Hikozaemon understood the working of the human mind. The perfect ease with which in the world of mind means were adapted to ends by such experts falls nothing short of the skill manifested by the mechanic, the builder, and the engineer in the world of matter. It is in their intimate knowledge of human nature that so many of the ancient Japanese especially excelled, and on this account it is that their actions and words possess an undying interest.



CHAPTER IV.

In the ninth year of Kan-ei (A.D. 1632), in the month of August, heavy rain fell in Edo and its vicinity during seven days, causing great floods throughout the city and its neighbourhood. The Sumida and Tone rivers overflowed their banks; the various canals and moats of the city were flooded; walls gave way, and numbers of houses were wholly or partially under water. The Gongendō and the Sarugamata dikes were broken down in several places; the whole of the province of Shimōsa was flooded; and the following towns and villages were under water:—Kisai, Kurihashi, Satte, Sunamura, Susaki, the Northern and Southern Honjō, Bamba, Ishiwara, Nakanogō. A high wind blew after the rain had ceased, so that as far as the eye could reach, white crested waves were to be seen rolling in all directions. In every quarter people either escaped in boats, perched themselves on the tops of trees, or seated themselves on the roofs of houses. The loss of life was great and the destruction of property something appalling.

The two mayors of the city³ did their duty right nobly.

* *Machi-bugyō*. The term *bugyō*, was, and is, to a certain extent used in reference to the superintendent or controller of almost any business: whereas *machi-bugyō* is a title only applied to the chief officer of a municipal corporation. In addition to being at the head of municipal affairs, the city *bugyō* was the chief magistrate of the city and exercised judicial functions.

They rode about in various directions giving orders to those who were rescuing the drowning multitudes. Iemitsu, on seeing the proportions of the flood, exclaimed :—" A flood the like of which was never witnessed ! Get ready my horse ; I will ride out and see it."

Elaborate preparations for this expedition were made ; and the Shōgun left the castle and proceeded as far as Mitsuke, Asakusa. Here a scene at once imposing and distressing presented itself. The rush of the mighty torrent—the triumphant way in which it swept aside every obstacle—the rapidity with which it made a path for itself over submerged houses and along high roads, respecting no man's property, and setting at defiance the attempts made to place a limit on its domain—all this was surpassingly grand. But combined with this were some heart-rending sights. Men, women, and children were to be seen battling in the most desperate manner with the foe ; the *debris* of hundreds of houses, articles of furniture, masts of vessels, the fragments of broken bridges, and occasionally large pieces of timber, with some poor wretches clinging to them as a last forlorn hope, passed in rapid succession before the eyes of the spectator. It is said that the Shōgun was overawed by what he saw, and that, proceeding to the edge of the water, he remained there quite motionless, rapt in solemn reverie.

While meditating what to do to rescue the perishing multitudes, Iemitsu perceived clouds of spray rising from the water's edge, and presently, enveloped in the hazy mist, discerned a horse proceeding at a furious pace along the edge of the river. On the horse sat an old man who donned a helmet that had a golden cherry-blossom crest on it. The rider wore the black uniform of one of the Shōgun's vassals. As he approached, he reined in his steed; and when quite close, took one of his feet out of the stirrup, and bowed low. This horseman was no other than our old friend Ōkubo Hikozaemon Tadanori.

Alighting from his horse, Hikozaemon saluted the Shōgun. "Ah Hikozaemon! what a flood!" exclaimed Iemitsu. "The people over there in Honjo and Fukagawa are in great distress, eh? No end of people must have lost their lives. Is there no means of saving those that are left?"

"Well spoken!" replied Hikozaemon. "There is only one thing that will make people move at such a time as this—that is, the hope of gain. If you will give me a thousand *ryō*, I can save a large number."

"If you want money," replied the Shōgun, "of course it is as dust to me. I could give you any amount. But what is the use of money at such a time as this?"

Smiling, Hikozaemon replied:—"Your Highness, being very intelligent, understands most things; but there are some

things that your exalted position hides from view, and this is one of them. If you will give me the money, I will prove to you that what I say is correct."

"Very good," replied Iemitsu. "The money shall be given to you."

Here Hikozaemon set to work and extemporized a flag, on which he inscribed in large letters:—"A thousand *ryō*! Government Reward!" Attaching the flag to a bamboo pole, he erected it in a boat, and then, in company with some five or six boatmen, rowed about in all directions, shouting hither and thither over and over again:—"Men are perishing! men are perishing! A Government Reward! A Government Reward! One thousand *ryō* for every one saved! Tickets to be handed to all who save a man, woman, or child. *To the rescue! to the rescue!*"

People listened with amazement to those words. "Here is a chance!" said they. "Our houses are swept away, and our property is gone, but, goodness! what of that if one can get a thousand *ryō* as easily as this?"

Whereupon by hundreds they set to work and rescued the drowning one after another, until no less than eight hundred and seventy-two persons were brought to land. The rescuers took the tickets that Hikozaemon had distributed to their homes, and that night many were the cups of *sake* that were imbibed and numerous were the congratulations received

by the fortunate ticket-holders. Some of these had already planned what pieces of ground they would buy or what kind of houses they would erect with the money to be received on the morrow.

The next day, acting on the instructions given them, the rescuers proceeded to the house of Hikozaemon and, presenting their tickets, each one asked for the thousand *ryō* promised. They were informed that the sum of money offered was to be divided up among those who had taken part in saving the drowning, at the rate of so much for each person rescued. The number of persons saved being eight hundred and seventy-two, the reward given for each one rescued, amounted to 1 *ryō*, 0 *bu*., 2 *shu*., 2 *sen*., 1 *rin*., 6 *mō*.*

As may be imagined, the disappointment of the rescuers was very great. It was somewhat amusing to see the diverse ways in which the frustration of their hopes was borne by the different individuals concerned. Some laughed, some looked angry, some looked sad, while others seemed to be afraid to say what they thought or felt—it being government money that had been awarded to them.

My story now returns to the day on which the Shōgun encountered Hikozaemon by the river-side. Shortly

* 1 *ryō* = 4 *bu* ; 1 *bu* = 4 *shu* ; 1 *shu* = 6 *sen* 2r. 5m.; 1 *sen* = 10 *rin* ; 1 *rin* = 10 *mō*.

after the latter had set the people to rescue the drowning, the Shōgun, as he sat on his horse near the edge of the Sumida, inquired of those that surrounded him :—" Is there any one who has pluck enough to cross the Sumida to-day ? "

His attendants all looked at each other in dismay, not one of them opening his lips. After a moment's pause, Aoyama Ōkura-no-Yayū came forward and said :—" No matter how skilled the horse, or how expert the rider, such a thing is an impossibility. I beg that your Highness will desist from making such a request."

Whereupon Nagai Shinano-no-Kami interposed :—" What are you talking about, Aoyama ? In ancient times, when Minamoto Yoshitsune was at war with Kiso Yoshinaka, the river Uji* lay between the two camps. Did not Sasaki Takatsuna and Kajiwara Kagesue swim their horses across this river and attack the enemy on the other side ? Again, did not Akechi Samanosuke, when defeated by Hideyoshi, swim his horse across the Biwa Lake to the island of Karasaki †

* The Uji flows from Lake Biwa to Kyōtō, and thence to Yodo, from which place, under the name of the Yodo, to Ōsaka. The Uji seems to have been a very deep river in ancient times, but now it is so shallow that it can be crossed by travellers on foot.

† Though Karasaki is no longer an island, there is no doubt that it was so in ancient times. It is called an island in several old books, and it was on it that Tsukahara Bokuden landed the boasting fencer, according to the well known tale respecting the *Mute-kachi-ryū*, or Handless-Victory Style of fencing.

In later times, too, Masaki Daizen rode across the Bay of Edo—from Cape Futtsu to Cape Kwan-on."

"It is useless to quote what was done in days gone by," replied Aoyama. "Times are altered; and nowadays it is hard to find such daring and endurance as was displayed by our forefathers."

The Shōgun's ire was kindled by this remark, as it quietly took for granted that the warriors of his day were inferior to their ancestors; so, turning to his attendants, in a spirited manner he asked:—"Who were the performers of the exploits of which Shinano-no-Kami has been speaking? Were they not all the retainers of men of comparatively small means and influence? Takatsuna and Kagesue were the retainers of Yoritomo, when his domain was confined to the Kwantō.* Akechi Samanosuke was the retainer of Mitsuhide. Masaki was one of the dependants of Satomi. If the circumscribed dominions of these various rulers could boast of such names as those I have mentioned, is it to be for a moment supposed that in the sixty odd provinces over which I rule there is not a man to be found who has the courage to swim his horse across the Sumida to-day? Is there no one that will go?" asked the Shōgun impatiently, striking his saddle as he said it.

* East of the boundary. The boundary was at Hakone. The term Kwanto included the following eight provinces:—Sagami, Musashi, Aizu, Kazusa, Shimōsa, Hitachi, Kōzuke and Shimotsuke.

His attendants all looked aghast, and no one answered a word.

"Then I will open your eyes," said Iemitsu, urging his horse forward with the intention of crossing the river.

Itakura Naizen-no-Kami ran forward and, seizing the bridle reins of the Shōgun's horse, said:—"Come! come! This is too much of a good thing. Is your Excellency mad that he acts thus? The idea of risking a life so valuable as yours in an adventure of this kind! The courage shown in an attempt of this sort would be more akin to that displayed by brutes than to what is admired in soldiers. I pray you to desist."—

"No, no!" replied Iemitsu "I will not. Whatever issues from the Shōgun's lips must be adhered to. His words and actions must, like a mirror, reflect nothing but truth. To say one thing and do another, is contrary to what is right. So, let go that bridle, Naizen!"

Tada-aki, being on the outskirts of the crowd, did not hear for some time what was going on. When the particulars which we have related above were reported to him, he said:—"If no one is found to carry out the Shōgun's wishes, his renown will be tarnished thereby. Even supposing it costs me my life, I will undertake to accomplish the exploit he proposes. If I perish in the attempt, it will be but dying to please my master, as one would in battle. So here's for it!—death or renown."

Thus saying, Tada-aki urged his horse to the river-side; and, knowing that the animal would not enter the surging torrent if his head were turned towards the river, he skilfully wound him round and round, backing him into the river close to the Asakusa city-gate.

The adroitness with which Tada-aki managed the animal after he had entered the stream astounded the spectators. Whenever the horse seemed in any distress, he would sit on the back part of the saddle, or swim by his side. Then when the animal's hind-legs were carried down the stream, he would sit on the front part of the saddle, thus keeping him steady. He placed himself in all kinds of positions, and wheeled the horse hither and thither to suit the direction of the current. When he had proceeded far enough to be seen by the crowds that lined the banks of the river, cries were heard:—"There is some one in the water! There is a horseman crossing the river! Who is it?"

"Look, my Lord! look, my Lord!" shouted the attendants of Iemitsu, glad enough to find that the necessity for the Shōgun's risking his life in the way he proposed was obviated by the feat having been attempted by some one else.

"Who is he, that, in obedience to my command, has the ambition to be the first to cross the stream?" asked Iemitsu. "A skilled horseman, indeed! and a no less expert swimmer! Who *can* he be?"

Hikozaemon, who was near, replied :—" He is enveloped in the mist, and it is difficult to make out clearly, but if I am not mistaken, it is no other than Bungo-no-Kami."

" Conceited fellow ! " answered the Shōgun, cynically—
" He will make good food for the fish anyhow ! "

" Nothing of the kind will happen," replied Hikozaemon.
" Being a man well] versed in military exercises, and since crossing rivers on horseback is one of them, if I am not mistaken, he will cross to the other side without any mishap. But even supposing that he loses his life in the attempt, the loyalty that leads him to undertake such a daring exploit simply because his lord wishes it—this at any rate will not perish." Then, turning to Itakura, he asked :—
" What do *you* think about it, Itakura ? "

" Magnificent, indeed ! a hero the like of which has not been known in ancient or modern days ! " As those who stood near all re-echoed this sentiment, Hikozaemon danced about like a child overcome with joy.

While one after another the spectators joined in applauding Tada-aki, it was reported that there was another horseman in the water. All eyes were turned in the direction of the new object. The adventurer was an old man, and he rode a brown horse. The horse's saddle was adorned with mother of pearl set in very fine lacquer work. The rider wore a hempen garment gaily striped ; a dress

which was considered very fashionable in those days. He had a white handkerchief tied round his head, which, however, was scarcely visible from a distance owing to the shock of grey hair in which it was enveloped.

“Who is that?” inquired the Shōgun.

With a view to finding out, Itakura rode down to the edge of the water and shouted to the man:—“Who are you? who are you that crosses the river yonder? *Your name? Your name?*”

“I am the retainer of Abe Bungo-no-Kami, Hirata Danemon Tachibana Kiyotsune,”^{*} replied the old man of sixty-eight as he battled with the raging waters.

The Shōgun, on hearing who the equestrian was, was much moved and exclaimed:—“Among the hundreds of my followers present here to-day, there are only two that have dared to carry out my proposal. Rare loyalty, indeed, this of Bungo-no-Kami!—and that he should have a retainer who is no less brave and faithful than himself, is still more wonderful!”

The two heroes reached the other side safely. On Danemon's landing, Tada-aki said:—“Well done, old man!”

* This multiplication of names only occurs on very important occasions when men feel proud of themselves. In my *New Life of Toyotomi Hideyoshi* (Appendix) Japanese nomenclature is briefly discussed.

Who would have thought it?—But where did you get your horse?"

Smiling, Danemon replied:—"Well, the horse belongs to one of the Shōgun's personal attendants, a man of the same rank as yourself. It was tied up near where I was standing when you set out. So, without saying a word to any one, I jumped on its back and started after you."

No sooner was it perceived by the spectators that the two horsemen had reached the opposite bank than the Shōgun gave orders that a boat should be prepared to bring them back. While the preparations for despatching the boat were being completed, the two men were seen to mount their horses, enter the stream, and commence their return journey.

The Shōgun, perceiving this, hastened on the preparation of the boat, and waved his fan to and fro to signify to the two horsemen that he did not wish them to swim their horses back. But they, seeing the rapid way in which the Shōgun in his anxiety to check them was moving the fan, thought that he was beckoning to them to return.

"He is bidding us hasten back," said Tada-aki. So with eager hearts, feeling sure by the interest evinced that the Shōgun's ill-temper was cured, they sped on their way back to the point from which they had started. When they had come about one-sixth of the way across the river, they

met the boat which had been despatched for their use. As it drew near, Danemon said to his master :—" Do not enter the boat, sir, or it will sure to be said that Bungo-no-Kami would have been drowned had it not been for the help received from the Shōgun ; and this will sully the lustre of the day's exploit. We have come all this way ; a little more pushing will bring us to land. We'll go the whole hog while we are about it !"

" You are right," replied Tada-aki. And, turning to the officer in charge of the boat, one Mukai Shōgen, he said :—" The kindness of His Highness in sending to meet us is very great. But we respectfully beg to decline the assistance offered. We prefer to swim back, having come thus far."

The words were hardly out of Tada-aki's lips before Danemon's horse was struck by a huge piece of timber that was floating down the stream. Both the horse and his rider were submerged. Danemon rose some distance down the river. He appeared to be very exhausted and was separated from his steed, so the boatmen lifted him into the boat, little as he relished being thus treated.

In the meanwhile, Tada-aki had landed. He was greeted on the bank of the river with enthusiastic shouts, and was at once received by the Shōgun in one of the houses which at that time stood on the city-wall at Asakusa. Tada-aki appeared before the Shōgun just as he was, with

his clothes all streaming wet. Having paid his respects to him in due form, he waited to hear what Iemitsu would be pleased to say to him.

"An extraordinary feat this of yours, Abe Bungo!" commenced the Shōgun. "My eyes have never had such a treat as they have had to-day. The skill with which you battled with the raging waters delighted me beyond measure. A splendid accomplishment, indeed! the like of which has never been seen. While there are such men as you left, the military rule of the Tokugawa house will maintain its pre-eminence in the state. Therefore it is that I rejoice at what I have seen to-day." Iemitsu then took a fan and fanned Tada-aki; this being one of the customary ways of showing high approval.

Not a word had been addressed to Tada-aki by the Shōgun since the memorable fencing match. Now, not only to hear himself spoken to, but to hear words of high eulogy proceeding from his master's lips—what greater joy could he have? Tears rolled down his cheeks as he replied:—"The exploit you have witnessed to-day, my Lord, is not the result of my possessing any superior skill, but solely owing to the kindness with which I have been treated by your Lordship and his predecessors."

The Shōgun was very much affected and in his turn could not refrain from weeping. When he had recovered

himself he said :—"The feat of your retainer Danemon to-day was not one that any ordinary man could have accomplished. I trust you will not forget his services to you. I have nothing valuable here to offer you, your loyalty will be rewarded later on. In the meanwhile take this fan."

The fan given consisted of a red round ball, intended to represent the sun, with a black groundwork. Tada-aki was very much pleased with this token, and ever afterwards the new symbol was made a part of his family crest by the hawk's wings that formed a part of his original armorial bearings being set in a red groundwork.

Not many days after the incident related above, Tada-aki was informed that the Shōgun had been pleased to increase his income by a grant of ten thousand *roku per annum*. Subsequent to this Tada-aki seems to have been on the most friendly relations with Iemitsu.

It is generally considered that, had it not been for the faithful reproof so unsparingly administered by Hikozaemon, Tada-aki and some others, notwithstanding the many noble qualities which Iemitsu possessed, he would have never proved equal to the task of consolidating the Tokugawa rule. Had Iemitsu turned out to be an unworthy successor of his illustrious grandfather, there is little doubt that the whole country would have relapsed into the state in which Hideyoshi found it. The powerful clans of the north and south

would have fought for independence, and the whole country would have again been convulsed by civil war. Any one that reads between the lines as he studies the lives of Hideyoshi and Ieyasu, cannot but perceive that one of the great, perhaps the greatest, factor that contributed to their unparalleled success was the ready ear that they both gave to wise counsel. They were both perfectly well aware that a clever stroke of policy is the result of the most thorough acquaintance with all the minutiae of a situation; and that this knowledge can only be obtained by allowing as far as practicable those who are in constant attendance on a ruler to tell him just what they think and believe about everything. They were both, too, cognizant of the fact that the faults of a ruler are more patent to the eyes of a faithful retainer than they can be to himself, and that it is therefore most desirable that his subordinates should be encouraged by him to reprove on all suitable occasions what appears to them to be faulty in their master's conduct. So important did this seem to Ieyasu that before he died he expressly charged Ōkubo Hikozamemon to deal faithfully with his successors, not sparing reproof when he thought it necessary. And on one occasion, when conversing with some friends in the castle of Suruga, Ieyasu expressed his sentiments on this subject as follows:—

“A retainer who, seeing some fault in his master, has the courage to reprove the same is superior to the man

who puts himself in the forefront of the battle. The reason for my saying this is as follows:—The man who attacks the enemy in the forefront of the battle risks his life of course, but he does it to win fame. If he conquers, he becomes noted and receives all kinds of rewards from his lord; if he dies, he leaves an illustrious name behind him. But on the other hand, nine out of every ten of those who severely reprove their masters' unreasonable or wicked conduct, incur great danger by so doing; for as a rule when a master is attached to what is wrong, he does not care to be interfered with. With him the old saying, 'Good medicine is bitter in the mouth and golden words offend the ears', turns out to be true. Such masters object to sharp reproof. For the most part, then, you find that when retainers see that any faithful words uttered by them only have the effect of alienating their masters from them, they either pretend to be ill or retire into private life. If not this, then they resort to flattery, with the hopes of currying favour with their masters. But for a retainer to take upon himself the duty of reproving his lord for the faults that he commits, despite the risk of disgrace or death—despite the risk of bringing trouble on his family as well as on himself—is a far more difficult task than throwing away his life in battle."

Iemitsu showed both good sense and proper feeling in the readiness with which with few exceptions he listened

patiently and even humbly to the strictures of his conduct which his friends considered it their duty to pronounce, despite the fact that these strictures were frequently administered in a far more severe way than was at all necessary. Nothing could be more marked than the thoughtfulness, consideration for others and general nobleness which marked the later years of Iemitsu's life. The many foolish acts and speeches of his early years, (a few specimens of which I have given here) were redeemed later on by conduct and language which were free from all forms of selfishness and full of consideration for others.

The lesson taught Iemitsu by Tada-aki was one of the hardest that a man born in affluent circumstances has to learn, one which in point of fact only those whose good sense and noble feeling are far above the average ever do learn. Iemitsu was taught that the homage, to say nothing of the flattery, which those born great habitually receive too frequently makes them blind to their deficiencies and oblivious to the fact that it is their worth, and not their rank which alone can entitle them to praise. This story illustrates the fact that of all the maladies from which the human heart suffers in this world of ours what is known as wounded pride is the hardest to heal. This ailment has marred friendship in countless instances and embittered the lives of thousands of men and women. It is only the stronger and nobler

natures that succeed in conquering the feeling and despising it, as Ienitsu eventually did. There is much truth in Ieyasu's saying, "Harm will come to the man who knows how to conquer but knows not how to be defeated." Equanimity and persistence of purpose under reverses are essential characteristics of real greatness in nations and individuals alike.



APPENDIX TO TALE I

IN London there is a large hospital called "The Foundling Hospital," to which all unclaimed children picked up on the streets of great cities or in country roads and lanes are sent to be fed, clothed, and taught.

Abe Tada-aki, the hero of the foregoing tale, may be said to have been one of the early pioneers of modern charity in this country, in that he turned his house into a foundling hospital. In it were gathered a number of boys and girls who had been cast off by their parents, and who were brought up by Tada-aki with the greatest care.

When it became widely known that Tada-aki would take care of any children who were abandoned on the roadside, parents who found it impossible to maintain their children would wait till he came along the road and then would place their children in his way.

One of Tada-aki's followers, seeing this, remonstrated with his master. "Had you not," said he, "better stop this practice of yours? People see that you are ready to maintain all the children whom you pick up on the roadside, so they purposely place their children in your way. If this goes on there will be no end to the children whom you will have support."

To these remarks Tada-aki replied :—"There is nothing stronger than the affection of parents for their children. That parents should be able to overcome this strong feeling and get rid of their offspring must be owing to a state of extreme poverty. Therefore, even supposing that they purposely hand their children over to me, I cannot well refuse to maintain them. If in doing this I were in any way stinting the members of my household or putting them to inconvenience, it would be another matter. But I am merely using money generally squandered on pleasure and debauchery in maintaining children whose parents are too poor to provide for them. Besides this, I am a man of some rank and position, and therefore ought to be actuated by public spirit that reaches even to the lowest strata of society. The number of children who are abandoned on the roadside in this country is very large. This is a disgrace to the nation, to wipe off which I regard as part of my duty."

Subsequent to this his earnestness in maintaining and educating the children of the poor increased rather than diminished. A large number of boys and girls were sent out into life by him well equipped for its duties and well guarded against its temptations.

JAPAN IN DAYS OF YORE.

II.

HUMAN NATURE IN A VARIETY OF ASPECTS.

CHAPTER I.

IN the time of Yoshimune, the eighth Tokugawa Shōgun, (A.D. 1717-1744) there were in Japan a large number of noted government officials, but for ability and nobleness of nature there was no one worthy of comparison with Ō-oka Tadasuke, Echizen-no-Kami. For twenty years he was one of the *Bugyō*, or Mayors, of Edo;* and during this time, agreeable to the custom of those days; he had to pass judgment on some hundreds of legal cases. Prior to this Tadasuke had served the Government as *Bugyō* of Yamada, in Ise. Though of course his administration of justice was not altogether free from the faults and abuses that disfigured the legal proceedings of the age in which he lived, yet in comparison with

* It seems that there were always two *Bugyō* in Edo, and they were supposed to serve in turn a month at a time. But during his tenure of office all the more difficult legal cases seem to have been tried by Ō-oka Tadasuke, and next to nothing was heard of the existence of another *bugyō*.

his predecessors and contemporaries, Tadasuke was little given to the use of torture, and he abstained from various other malpractices of the courts of that day.

The nobleness of some men's natures seems to elevate them above the meannesses, the follies and the cruelties of the age in which they live. Such was eminently the case with Ō-oka Tadasuke. When the technicalities of law seemed to ascribe guilt to individuals who to his discerning eye and practised legal judgment seemed to be innocent, he had a happy way of ignoring altogether or of bringing forward some plausible substitute for those technicalities. Of his mode of acting on these occasions it may doubtless be said that it destroyed the sanctity of law. But to this it may be replied that when the observance of the sanctity of law and the administration of strict justice were plainly incompatible with each other no one possessing such fine moral instincts as those with which Tadasuke was endowed could possibly hesitate as to what course to take. Tadasuke lived in an age in which there was but little legal criticism, in which the proceedings of Courts of Law depended more on the administrators of the Code than on the character of the Code itself. Few but the judges themselves knew what the laws were. Most of the cases upon which Tadasuke pronounced judgment, and where his mode of procedure strikes us nowadays as so

remarkably shrewd and natural, were cases of which none of the technicalities of precedence formed a part. They were entirely new and extraordinary in character, such as had never occurred before and were likely never to occur again. His mode, or rather his modes, for he never confined himself to any one in particular, of extracting evidence from criminals was novel in the extreme,* and such as could only be adopted by a judge endowed with extraordinary original genius. The knowledge of human nature, the fruitfulness of resource, the indomitable perseverance which Tadasuke's judgments display make the *Ō-oka Meiyo Seidan*† one of the most interesting as well as the most instructive books that have issued from the modern press. From this work I have extracted the details given in the following tale.

Among the cases which were brought before Tadasuke, those of Ten-ichibō, Echigo Denkichi, Murai Chōan, Hikobei the *Komamonoya*,‡ Kihachi the Tobacconist, Matsudo Ohana, Konishiya, Mizu-nomi Muranokusuke, and the one I am now about to relate, that of Gotō Hanshirō, are the chief.

* See Appendix.

† The *Ō-oka Meiyo Seidan* contains a full account of the most noted cases tried by Tadasuke.

‡ *Komamonoya* is a term applied to the man who sells, or the shop at which articles of women's toilet, such as mirrors, combs, rouge, toothbrushes, tooth-powder, etc. are sold, a Fancy Goods' Shopkeeper.

Gotō Hanshirō, though the son of a poor peasant, being endowed with great physical strength combined with considerable force of character, and being propelled by unusually strong virtuous impulses from his earliest days, rose to rank and distinction. He was created some years before his death one of Yoshimune's *Hatamoto*. His life was spent on behalf of others; and he therefore stands high in the list of those to whom heroic acts are entirely unconstrained, flowing out fully and freely from their heroic natures like water from a fountain. There is a verse of Japanese poetry which runs thus:—

“Of *men* there are enough.

“A *man* there is not.

“Make men *to be* men:

“And a man *you* will be.

“Act *like* a man:

“And a man you will *become*.”

With the sentiment expressed in these lines giving colour to all his actions, Hanshirō passed through the world and left his record behind him in the hearts of all who had known him.

Gotō Hanshirō was born in Kōya, a small village situated in Sanuki, near the castle-town of Marugame. His father, Hanzaemon, was the owner of a few rice-fields, by the cultivation of which he managed to earn a com-

fortable living. Hanshirō had an elder brother called Hansaku. In disposition the two brothers were the opposite of each other. The elder one was quiet, retiring and unambitious; the younger, full of spirit, a champion among the boys of his own age, who would not brook an insult from any one, fond of fun, mischievously inclined, but with this propensity well under control. Though the dispositions of the two lads differed so much, they were nevertheless very good friends. Affection for his kith and kin was one of Hanshirō's most deeply rooted instincts. No son could have performed his home duties more scrupulously or more earnestly than he, arduous as some of these were. He cut wood, drew water, dug the ground, carried messages, and executed with speed and regularity all the minor tasks which devolve on the sons of poor parents. The thorough way in which he carried everything through that he took in hand made him a favourite in the village of Kōya, and his services for day-labour were in constant demand. But as the proverb has it, "Even he that is supposed to be free from weaknesses has a large number."* There is no man without some weakness or propensity that may lead him astray at any time. "It is owing to their propensities that men diverge from the right path," says Confucius. Hanshirō, though free from many of the

* *Kuse nakute, nana-kuse.*

vices of youth, was given to taking more *sake** than was good for him. He did not drink, however, to the extent of being unfit for work, and therefore this habit did not prevent his obtaining employment in the village. But, like all other weaknesses, it was bound sooner or later to prove a cause of trouble, being calculated to excite the brain and unfit him who was subject to it for the cool, circumspect action which certain occasions and situations render necessary. And this is just what occurred, as will be seen later on in the story.

Among Hanshirō's relations there was a man called—Sajiemon. Sajiemon was a well-to-do farmer in the receipt of an income of about one hundred and fifty *roku* a year. It happened that when Hanshirō was about thirteen years of age, Sajiemon had occasion to send fifty *ryō*, in those days rather a large sum of money, to a friend in Matsuyama, Iyo. Sajiemon thought that young as Hanshirō was, rather than employ a stranger, it would be better to send him with the money, since he was both honest and brave.

It was about three o'clock, on a winter afternoon, when Hanshirō received this commission. With his usual despatch, he went home and hurriedly made his preparations for starting at once. His parents, on learning the nature

* A term applied to any kind of fermented liquor.

of the business on which he was going, were very much opposed to his setting out with such a large sum of money within two hours of sunset. But his youthful intrepidity caused him to scorn their advice as the over-carefulness of affectionate parents. "If I meet a robber on the way, so much the worse for the robber," said he. "I will soon make an end of him." And off he went, full of spirit and daring, eager to encounter the dangers of the road.

Long before he reached Matsuno-o, his first stopping-place, it was quite dark. On his arrival at that village between eight and nine o'clock, he felt very hungry; and, as he purposed travelling on through the night and as the road which lay immediately before him was very mountainous, he thought he had better make a good meal there. Going therefore to a small wayside-inn, he ordered a quart of hot *sake*, and told the innkeeper to get ready the best meal he could for him. The food was poor; but to a hungry man nothing comes amiss. So Hanshirō soon demolished what was set before him, and astonished the innkeeper by ordering another quart of *sake*.

"Well, to be sure! You *do* drink!" exclaimed the innkeeper. "Two quarts of *sake* for such a young fellow is not bad, I must say! What makes you drink so much?"


"Well," replied Hanshirō, "the road ahead is pretty stiff, so I need to fortify myself against it. The amount

of *sake* I have taken is not more than I shall work off in climbing those hills."

Just as Hanshirō was drinking the *sake*, some five or six palanquin bearers came rushing into the inn. "Halloo, there! Mr. Innkeeper! have you shut up shop?" shouted one of the bearers. "Am sorry to trouble you, but just hand us some *sake*, will you."

Here the bearers were supplied with *sake*. While they were drinking it, Hanshirō took out his purse to pay his account, and, with the thoughtlessness and carelessness of youth, his head, moreover, being somewhat muddled by the liquor he had consumed, he revealed to the bystanders, who were watching him narrowly, that he had a purse full of money. Instead of keeping the money he was to spend on his journey in a separate purse, he seems to have had it and Sajiemon's money all in one bag, which, by its length, showed that it contained a large number of coins. While Hanshirō was paying his account two of the bearers were seen to whisper to each other, and presently one of them, addressing Hanshirō, inquired:—"Ay, young chap! where may you be off for?"

Without any suspicion, Hanshirō replied:—"I am going as far as Matsuyama, and purpose travelling through the night."



"It is very dangerous journeying at night, as you propose doing," replied one of the bearers; "had you not better hire a palanquin? Though it is rude of me to say so, you seem too to have a great deal of money with you, and, young as you are, surely it is not safe for you to travel alone."

"It is very good of you to concern yourself so much about me," rejoined Hanshirō, "but, to tell you the truth, I dislike palanquins, and being naturally a good pedestrian, who thinks nothing of doing his thirty or forty miles a day, I prefer to walk."

Thus saying, Hanshirō tightened his sandals and was preparing to start, when the bearers in a body sprang up and began to urge him vehemently to ride in their palanquin. "Come! ride," said one of them. "There never was such a thing heard of as a lad so young as you walking in the mountains at this time of night."

"If you won't ride", said another, "then, treat us to some *sake*."

"It may be that this young fellow is a thief who has stolen his master's money and that he is now trying to run away with it," remarked a third.

Hanshirō saw that things were beginning to look very ugly. But he determined before having a fight with the men to try what gentler means would do. So he quietly

replied to the charge of having stolen the money by informing the coolies who he was and by explaining to them how such a large sum of money came to be entrusted to him.

"Very well;" said one of the bearers, "that may be all correct. But we want some money, so be quick and give it to us."

Hanshirō saw that further reasoning was useless and, feeling that he was no match for such a number as confronted him, he thought it best to run away. So, tying the money tight round his waist, in an instant he made an opening for himself in the circle of bearers who surrounded him, and was about to set off, when one of the men stretched out his hand and, seizing him by the clothes, said:—"Do you think you are going to escape like that? Not a bit of it!"

The bearers now closed in around Hanshirō, and one of them tried to seize his purse.

The lad saw that it was no use mincing matters any longer, so, snatching up one of the forms belonging to the inn, he commenced to defend himself against his assailants in right earnest. They rushed on him pell-mell; but he was a powerful young fellow, and he wielded the form with agility and skill that astonished the coolies. One after another, with bruised limbs or broken crowns,

they skulked away, until Hanshirō was left alone in the inn.

"Better I had taken the advice of my folks and waited till the morning, instead of running the risk of losing the money in this way," he muttered to himself. "But, however, 'in for a penny in for a pound,' as the saying is. 'When once on a tiger's back, there must be no getting off.'—Dangers surround me, but encounter them I will, yes, and surmount them I shall, unless I am very much mistaken." Thus saying, he hurried on his way.

Nothing of importance occurred to him till he reached a forest of pines, situated at some distance from the scene of the affray just described. Here the coolies all made their appearance again, attended by some dozen associates. Springing out on Hanshirō suddenly, they accosted him as follows:—"Aha! you are he who attacked us at the inn, eh? We are come to take your life, your clothes and your money by way of retaliation."

"Heavens! here's an affair!" exclaimed Hanshirō. "Now they will make an end of me! Anyhow, I will die hard!" So saying, he put his back against a pine tree; and, though he had no weapon in his hand, hoping to get hold of one in the first encounter, in a defiant tone, he shouted:—"Come on!"

"Let us kill him at once before any one arrives to assist him," said one of the coolies. And thereupon,

rushing at Hanshirō, with a palanquin bearing-pole he dealt a heavy blow at his head.

Hanshirō, as quick as lightning, avoided the stroke ; and in an instant, adroitly seizing the pole, thrust it into the side of his assailant. The man's breath was taken away by the blow and, reeling over, he fell to the ground as though he were dead. Assailant after assailant Hanshirō either knocked down with his pole, seized and sent flying through the air or dashed against the trees. Thus he held out against his foes for some time, but, as ill-luck would have it, the staff which he had been using so vigorously suddenly broke in two.

"Now it is all up with me," thought the lad. But with that persistent clinging to life and that tendency to hope even when there seems nothing to hope for which is so prominent a characteristic of heroic souls and which so often insures the realization of their wishes, Hanshirō determined not to give up as long as there was a chance of escape. Weaponless as he was, there was nothing for it but to run away. He set off as fast as his legs would carry him and kept well ahead of his foes for some five or six *chō*,* when he arrived at a place where the road divided into two parts. Hoping to elude his pursuers by

*=358 Eng. feet, or $\frac{1}{15}$ stat. mile.

so doing he took the less frequented of the two roads, and was still making rapid progress when suddenly he was confronted by some seven or eight men who had been placed in ambush here to intercept him in case he attempted to escape. Seeing that further flight was impossible, he seized one of the small trees that grew by the road-side and commenced to defend himself against his new assailants. But he had been running, and he found his strength failing. While in the act of aiming a blow at his foes, his foot slipped and he fell to the ground.

The robbers, for such they were, (though, according to the custom of those days, they acted as palanquin bearers to enable them to rob with greater facility), seeing this, commenced their attack afresh, and made sure of killing the lad there and then.

Hanshirō now set up a cry of despair. "*Murder ! murder !*" shouted the lad.

But how useless did such a cry seem ! What answer could be expected but the repetition, and hence the intensification, of its sad accents in the form of the echoes of the wood ? At such an hour of night in such a place what likelihood was there of any but Heaven hearing the cry of distress ?

But wonderful to relate, human ears heard that voice, and human help hastened to the spot from whence it

proceeded. Suddenly there sprang out from the forest a powerful man, arrayed in the garb of a warrior-pilgrim (*Musha-shugyōja*).^{*}

"Away with you! away with you! you greed-loving scoundrels!" shouted the man. "Life is too precious to allow it to be taken in this fashion. Cheer up, young fellow! I will rescue you."

Here the champion, springing into the midst of the robbers, with a huge iron bar, such as were used in those days by warriors of great strength and skill,[†] in whose hands they proved the most formidable of weapons, commenced to knock them about as though they were nine-pins. Flourishing the bar right and left, in a few minutes he had worked such terrible havoc among them that he and the lad were surrounded by their disabled foes.

* A *Musha-shugyōja* was a person who, from religious motives, took with the object of perfecting himself in warlike attainments, travelled as a warrior-pilgrim. The men who led this life were few, and their pilgrimage differed considerably from that of the Buddhist monks.

The man who had come to the rescue of Hanshirō was one of the many warrior-pilgrims who traversed the country in search of adventure at this time. After the affray was over he looked round to see what had become of Hanshirō. He found that the lad had fainted, and was lying close to the spot where he had previously fallen. Speedily the good man fetched water and applied restoratives, and in a few minutes Hanshirō revived.

After thanking his benefactor for the help he had given, Hanshiro related to him the whole history of the previous night's incidents and the events that had led to them. Whereupon the warrior-pilgrim observed:—"I watched you as you withstood those villains who assailed you. Though a farmer's son, you are no ordinary lad. Your exploits to-night astounded me beyond measure."

The speaker, on being asked who he was, said;—"I am Gotō Gozaemon Hidemori, from Funai, Bungo. I practise a style of fencing known as the *Mutiryū*, or 'Swordless-style.' You need not fear therefore any further trouble from these robbers. As the distance to Matsuyama is still something considerable, however, I will see that you reach that place in safety."

To this proposal Hanshiro gladly consented, and they set out for Matsuyama. From conversation held on the

road Hidemori learnt that Hanshirō was highly esteemed by his parents and elder brother, and, having had abundant proof of his valour, he thought to himself:—"How would it be to make this lad my heir and teach him the style of fencing which I have adopted? Such a successor would never bring reproach on my name. In instructing such a daring young fellow I should be but 'giving wings to the tiger,' as it were, that is, I should be making one who is already formidable still more so."

On Hidemori's making known his thoughts to Hanshirō, the latter fell in with the plan. So, after delivering the money to the person for whom it was destined, Hidemori and the lad returned to the village of Kōya to solicit the consent of Hanshirō's parents to the proposed plan.

Hanshirō's father listened with astonishment and admiration to Hidemori as he narrated to him Hanshirō's exploits. Though loath to part with so brave and noble a lad, he felt he could not well refuse to comply with the request of the man but for whom his son would have been numbered with the dead.

Hidemori now set up a fencing school in the precincts of Marugame castle, about eight miles from Hanshirō's home. This Hanshirō found very convenient, as it enabled him while living with his adopted parent to visit his real parents and elder brother whenever he wished.

From morning to night Hanshirō practised the *Mutō* style of fencing, until he became extremely proficient in it, when Hidemori made him his successor in the fencing school and gave him the name of Gotō Hidekuni. When this had been effected Hidemori started off on another pilgrimage, taking an eastward direction.



CHAPTER II.

HANSHIRŌ kept up the fencing school in Marugame for three years with [redacted] Month by month his fame rose higher [redacted] The money which he received as fees he [redacted] to his parents or to the poor, keeping only [redacted] to maintain himself.

At the end of [redacted] happened that the daily routine of the fencing-school [redacted] was interrupted one day by an occurrence which, however commonplace nowadays, was in those times a great event—a letter arrived. The messenger who brought it said that he had come from a very distant part of the country. The letter proved to be from Hidemori, who was at that time in Ōmama, Kōtsuke, a place over four hundred miles from Marugame.

On opening the letter, Hanshirō found that his adopted father was dangerously ill and desired to see him as soon as possible. So, entrusting his pupils to the care of a friend, he set out for Ōmama, and travelled as rapidly as was possible in those days. Great was his disappointment on arrival to find that Hidemori had been dead nearly a week.

After settling Hidemori's affairs, Hanshirō started for Marugame again, with the intention, however, of seeing Edo on his way home.

On the outskirts of Kumagaya there were at the time of which I write, as now, numerous small taverns at which for a few cash travellers could obtain a meal and a cup or two of *sake*. Late one winter afternoon there arrived at one of these taverns an extremely well-dressed and refined looking married couple. Their costume, general appearance and whole demeanour indicated that they were unaccustomed to travel. The man looked as though he had been brought up in ease and luxury. Though his face showed that he was of a good family, and his equipments were those of a high class knight, his limbs lacked the muscle and the development which inurement to the hardships of a warrior's life is calculated to produce. His wife's delicate frame and refined ladylike manners showed that she too was little cut out for enduring the toils and privations which travelling in those days necessarily involved. They both seemed very tired when they reached the little tavern. After taking their meal, they were about to continue their journey, when the innkeeper, seeing that they were inexperienced travellers, thought it would be only kind to inquire where they were going at such a late hour in the afternoon. To this query, the *samurai*,*

* A general name for all persons who were privileged to wear two swords, from the Shōgun and *Daimyō* down to the lowest grade. Knight is perhaps the nearest English approach to the meaning of the term, though in some respects somewhat misleading.

for such he was, replied, "We are on our way to Edo and wish to reach Kōnosu to-night. How far may it be to that place?"

"People say that it is only twelve miles from here," replied the innkeeper; "but in reality it is more. It is now after four o'clock, and the road between this and Kōnosu lies along an embankment that is infested with robbers. Excuse me for making the remark, but your august partner does not look as though she could bear such a long journey after the fatigues of the road you have already traversed. I would strongly advise you to put up here for the night."

Just at this point five or six palanquin-bearers came rushing into the tavern. And, after taking a glance at the married couple and asking in what direction they were going, one of them, addressing the *samurai*, said:—"We are on our way home and can take you cheap, sir. Please hire our palanquins."

"No," replied the *samurai*, "as it seems to be some distance to Kōnosu, and travelling, I hear, is not very safe just now, I think we had better put up here for the night."

"What is the gentleman saying? He is no doubt a stranger to these parts," rejoined one of the bearers. "The innkeeper has evidently been trying to persuade

your Honour to put up here for the night. Of course it is to the interest of an innkeeper to do so. It is said to be twelve miles from here to Kōnosu, but in reality it is not more than seven. We will take you for three *sen*,^{*} sir. If we go quickly, I have no doubt the gentleman will not object to give us a drink at the end of the journey. This is all we shall ask."

The innkeeper knew that the men were highway-robbers in disguise; but it was as much as his life was worth to interfere. So he held his tongue; and the married couple, being unacquainted with the ways of the world and novices in travelling, were deceived by the plausible speech of the men, and, entering their palanquins, set out for Kōnosu.

"Ah!" exclaimed the innkeeper to his servant Yasuke after they had started, "such people are to be pitied. Any one as ignorant of the world as they are ought not to travel at such times as these. There they are in the hands of robbers! I would have said something, but did not dare. Ill-luck take it!—We'll do no more selling to-day, lad. There is no knowing how many more of these scoundrels may turn up. Up with the shutters, boy, as sharp as you can, and bolt the door."

* This would be the equivalent of about thirty cents nowadays.

Yasuke hastened to obey these orders ; and had nearly finished the closing in, when a huge man, wearing two swords and carrying a large iron bar, made his appearance.

"Master is right," said the lad to himself. "We have not seen the last of the robbers yet. Here is a man who looks to be their chief."

While Yasuke was thinking of how best to get rid of the new visitor, "Here, here, boy! hand me a cup of *sake*, will you," shouted the traveller; "and get ready some fish. Goodness me! how short the days are growing!" And, on the lad delaying to bring the *sake*, he added, "'During the month of November employ no one who has not his wits about him'—a true saying enough that—come, boy! look sharp! What are you up to there?"

Yasuke eyed the stranger from head to foot. He had never seen any one who looked so formidable before. His limbs were all of unusual size; his eyes gleamed with fire; his hair had been allowed to grow long in the centre of the head, where in those days it was usually shaven close to the skin, and hung in a disshevelled, careless fashion, adding considerably to the general fierce appearance of the man to whom it belonged. "This fellow is no doubt the head of the gang of robbers who have just left us," thought Yasuke. Bowing low to the

ground in a most respectful manner, with a tremulous voice, he accosted the stranger as follows:—"I am extremely sorry, sir, that you should have had the trouble to come here for nothing, but we have neither fish nor *sake* left."

"Well, well! what a place to be sure!" exclaimed the traveller, "you have rice I suppose, I will take some rice."

"I am sorry to say we have no rice ready," replied the lad.

"Well, then, I will put up for the night here. I see you have a notice outside to say that you put people up. Boil some rice as quickly as you can, will you?"

Thus saying, the stranger was about to take off his sandals and go up on the mats, when, again bowing to the ground, Yasuke interposed:—"It is most unfortunate, sir, but to-night there is a meeting to be held in this house, and all the rooms will be occupied, so we are not able to put any one up to-night."

"The Devil take you!" blurted out the stranger, looking fiercely at the lad. "Who *are* you? Are you a servant or the master of this house? You are telling me lies, you rascal!—why, here are fish in the tub—and here is *sake* too. Do you think by my appearance that I am a robber?"

The stranger now went and helped himself to some *sake*, and, taking out a quantity of money from his purse, said:—"Here, look at this! I can pay for any amount of things. You are surely not stupid enough to think that I am one that would take victuals by main force and run away without paying for them?"

Instead of allaying Yasuke's suspicions, these remarks only tended to confirm them. "There is no doubt that this fellow has stolen that money," said he to himself. "No ordinary traveller would carry about so much money. I must get rid of him somehow or other."

"It is true, sir," observed the lad, "that, as you say, there are fish and *sake* here, but they are in readiness for the guests who are to assemble in this house to-night."

"What, lying again?" rejoined the stranger. "I will knock you down." Here he clenched his fist and raised his hand as if about to strike.

Whereupon Yasuke, thinking that "discretion was the better part of valour," and that, as things were beginning to look very serious, the sooner he was out of the reach of this giant's fist the better, scampered away into the next room.

The innkeeper, one—Hachigorō, had heard all that was going on and now thought it high time to interfere.

"I am afraid," sir, said Hachigorō, bowing low to the

ground, "that my servant has been very rude to you. He is a stupid fellow. We have fish and *sake* in the house, sir, so please take as much as you like of both ; and if there is anything else you wish for, sir, please order it."

"Come, come !" replied the stranger, "you need not make so many apologies. I was in the wrong. I had no business to take *sake* without leave. My wearing two swords and carrying this iron bar, my size and general appearance may make me look something like a robber. But I do not relish being taken for a robber on account of my looks."

"Of course not," replied the innkeeper. "Though I do not mean anything personal, people are not to be judged by appearances. Even Kan Shin, who afterwards became so great, was once seen receiving a little rice from an old woman who was washing clothes. And, subsequently the same man did not mind creeping beneath the legs of vulgar rustics.⁹ You too, though your out-

⁹ Here is the story as related in Chinese annals. One day some youths of the town in which he was residing met Kan Shin in the street and mockingly said to him, "You are a big man, and assume great airs, going about with a sword in your girdle, as though you were a very brave man. So much for appearance. You are a coward ! If you think otherwise, then show your courage by coming to fight with us. But if you are afraid to do this, then crawl between our legs."

Shin looked at the youths, and then, stooping down, crept between their legs. The townsfolk joined in a laugh at his expense, and made up

ward appearance may be against you, are a man the lustre of whose heart is unsullied. Like the lotus in the mud, you are undefiled by your surroundings."

"Well, well! now you are overrunning the mark!" rejoined the traveller. "There is no need for praising me after this fashion. You are a rare man though. It is not often that one finds a countryman who knows anything about the great men of China."

"Excuse me for being so rude as to say so, but if I am not mistaken," remarked the innkeeper, "the gentleman comes from the neighbourhood of Sanuki."

"*There* you are right," replied the stranger. "But how did you find it out?"

"By your language of course," said the innkeeper.

"Well, you are a sharp man," rejoined Hanshirō. "Yes, I hail from that part, and am no other than Gotō Hidekuni, instructor in a style of fencing known as the *Mutōryu*."

"Ah!" exclaimed the landlord, "many a time have

their minds that he was one of the greatest of cowards. But this same Shin lived to become a noted general and aided the Emperor Kōso in bringing the whole of China under his sway. His name took rank with that of Shō Ka and Chō Ryō, and his fame will live for ever.

Some insects, says the author of this story, before taking a great leap, contract their bodies into the smallest possible space; so Shin, after making himself as small as he could, leaped to the highest post in the kingdom.

I heard of you. Gotō Hidemori was well known in this town. Often has he been here teaching; and many a night has he put up in this very house. He frequently spoke of his adopted son, who, he said, was a most skilful fencer. And now I have the pleasure of seeing the said son before me. This is interesting indeed." Here the two men commenced to converse together at a great rate, Hanshirō giving a history of the whole of his past life.

At the close of the conversation, the innkeeper remarked:—"I only wish you had reached my house a little earlier. A distressing thing happened here just now."

The landlord then related what had occurred. On hearing which, Hanshirō exclaimed, "I will go and rescue these travellers." And forthwith, springing up, he prepared to set out.

"It is no use. It is too late," said the innkeeper.

"Even if it is too late," replied Hanshirō, "I will go and meet the scoundrels on their way back with the spoil, and will cut them to pieces and restore the money and the stolen goods to their former owners. I am just the man for such a time as this. I have no one dependent on me. I am fond of fighting. I am strong and fearless. Where the weak are oppressed, there does Hanshirō delight to go. 'To see the right thing to be done and not to do it, this is cowardice.' Away I go to look into this affair. If my

search prove fruitless, never mind; at any rate I shall have the satisfaction of knowing I have done my best." Then, after a pause, he continued:—"As the travellers may be wounded, do you get a doctor and wait here till I come back. Here, please take charge of my money till my return: I shall not need it."

The troubles of the two travellers are soon told. Un-suspicious, they were conveyed to a lonely spot situated about half way between Kumagaya and Kōnosu, where there stood at this time a small shed which contained a Buddhist idol. Here the palanquins were lowered, and the bearers, surrounding them, said to each other:—"Come! we have gone far enough. Here we will take our ease. Reckoning the value of their clothes, we have a prize worth quite a hundred *ryō*, so we'll have a jolly time of it."

The *samurai* heard this, and said to himself:—"A pretty trap we have fallen into! Well, it is fight or die—so, little as I know how, to save my wife from death—*fight I will.*"

One of the bearers now came forward and said:—"I may as well tell you at once that we have brought you to this place for the sake of robbing you, and therefore you had better make up your mind to deliver up quietly all that you possess. If you resist, we shall take your life."

"He has stolen the money and the woman too; and we will relieve him of both," said another of the men.

"Don't parley with him, but make haste and kill him," remarked a third.

Ill-prepared as was the *samurai* to contend against such odds, for he knew next to nothing of the art of fencing, yet, urged on by the desperateness of the situation in which he found himself, he drew his sword and commenced to fight vigorously. Better armed than his assailants, at first it seemed as though he were going to hold his own against them. Several of them fell wounded around him; but his lack of training began ere long to show itself in failure of strength, and, the men surrounding him on all sides, he found it no longer possible to protect himself against the blows of their clubs.

Having repeatedly been struck, he began to feel that all was over, when his attention was suddenly attracted by a great stir and hubbub which was taking place among the robbers. He looked anxiously in the direction of the noise and caught sight of a giant form dashing into the midst of his foes.

"Another assailant," thought the *samurai* for a moment. But no—the new arrival was not such. For, within a few minutes, man after man fell before the crushing blows of a heavy iron-bar, which this giant-warrior wielded as

though it were no heavier than a feather, until not a robber was left, and the *samurai* found himself confronted by this mysterious stranger. Was he a friend or a foe? His general appearance and his arrival on the spot at such an hour seemed unmistakably to indicate that he was the latter. He perhaps was the head of another gang of highwaymen and had come for the purpose of plundering the plunderers.

The reader does not need to be told that this new arrival was Hanshirō. Attracted by the loud weeping of the lady, who, while her husband was being attacked, had been tied to a tree, Hanshirō had found out the scene of the affray. And to him the work of slaying or scattering a dozen robbers was mere child's play.

While the *samurai* and his poor frightened wife were thinking that they had but "escaped from the wolf to be devoured by the tiger," Hanshirō made known to them who he was, and told them how he had obtained the information which had enabled him to put in such an opportune appearance.

The *samurai* was badly wounded. Hanshirō attended to his wounds, and then bade the married couple get into one of the palanquins. When they had entered, Hanshirō struck his hands together and exclaimed:—"There now! I was a stupid not to have kept two of those fellows

alive to bear the palanquin back to Kumagaya! Well, 'An after-thought is as good as no thought at all.' So I must make a shift somehow and carry them myself."

Hanshirō took his two swords and his iron-bar and, tying them to the end of one pole of the palanquin, managed to partially balance the weight of the persons inside, and then, making up for the deficient weight by heavy pressure on the other end, succeeded in bearing the conveyance along the road. Tremendous as was the strength required to carry such a heavy burden any distance after this fashion, Hanshirō, who had trained himself to succumb to no obstacles whatever, managed to reach the little tavern at Kumagaya with his charge.

Knocking at the door of the inn, he shouted—"Eh! Hachigorō!—I was just in time! I have come back!"

The doctor was in readiness, and the traveller's wounds were promptly attended to.

On inquiry Hanshirō found out that the *samurai* was from Echigo; that his name was Shindō Ichinojō; that he had been a retainer of Matsudaira, Echigo-no-Kami, the Baron of Takata; but that on account of an offence committed for which he expected heavy punishment, he had abruptly left the Baron's service; and that one Ōhashi Bun-emon had assisted his flight and had supplied him with

money for his journey to Edo. Ichinojō, then, was on his way to this place when the incidents which I have just described took place.

Hanshirō, who though so daring had a heart capable of deep sympathy for the distressed, listened with intense interest to Ichinojō's tale of suffering; and at its close offered to conduct the married couple to Edo in person and to set them up in business there.

So after they had remained some ten days at Kumagaya, Ichinojō's wounds being healed, Hanshirō paid all the expenses which had been incurred at the inn, and, bearing a letter from Hachigorō to his brother—Chōbei, who kept a small tavern in Bakurō-chō known as the Musashiya, the party set out for Edo; which they reached without further mishap.

Hanshirō remained in Edo about a month with Ichinojō and his wife. At the end of that time, after making them a present of twenty *ryō*, exhorting them to be diligent in business, and requesting Chōbei to do all he could to help them, he took his leave, and set out for Marugame.

Having passed through Kanagawa, Hanshirō was on his way to Hodogaya, when he was accosted by a man who was walking behind him as follows:—"If it is not a rude question to put, may I ask for what part of the country you are bound, sir?"

"I am going to Marugame, in Sanuki," replied Hanshirō.

"I am from Ōmi," said the man, "and am now on my way home, and so our road is the same. If you have no objection, I should like to keep you company as far as Ōmi."

"Well, there is a saying :—' Go to Ōmi for robbers and to Ise for beggars,' " replied Hanshirō. "So it will not do for me to be off my guard with an Ōmi man as a travelling companion!"

"The gentleman is fond of a joke, I see," replied the man. "Because people have given the Ōmi folks a bad name, it is not to be supposed that every man who comes from that part of the country is a rogue. I am a trader who has been to Edo on business. Having plenty of money in my purse, and the road being somewhat dangerous, I should be glad to have protection on the way. The gentleman being an honourable knight, I should feel quite safe if allowed to travel in his company."

"Very good then," replied Hanshirō, "you may accompany me if you will."

For some days they travelled together. The Ōmi man grew more and more familiar, until he began to speak and act as though he had known Hanshirō for twenty years. This gradually awakened the latter's suspicions. So, one night, while the two were drinking *sake* at

a tavern at which they had put up, Hanshirō determined to bring the matter to a point. Hence he quietly remarked :—
“It is said that this Tōkaidō is infested with those robbers in disguise known as *Goma-no-hai*, who pretend to be very friendly to travellers and then take the first opportunity of robbing them. You seem to me very much like one of those.”

“I am discovered,” thought the man ; “but Hanshirō has no proof to go on, and therefore he can do nothing.” So, without a change of countenance, he replied :—
“Well, the gentleman *is* fond of saying extraordinary things. Had I been a robber, do you suppose I should have travelled with you all these days without robbing you ?” Thus saying, the man took another cup of *sake*.

“A shrewd fellow this !” thought Hanshirō. “He is not to be caught napping. I will lay a snare for him, however, and make him show himself in his true colours.”

“So then you are not one of the sharpers of whom I have heard,” said Hanshirō. “To tell you the truth, I am rather anxious to meet with one of these fellows ; just to see whether he could get over me or not. Here, look ! I have a hundred *ryō*.” taking the money out of his pocket and showing it to the man ; “suppose now that you were a rogue, I would defy you to take this from me.” Then pausing, he added :—“But I am forgetting the proverb—

‘Though the thief may take his ease, the man who wishes to keep his property never should.’ Perhaps I am presumptuous in boasting in this way.”

This was done in order to inform the man that there was money to be had and to induce him to take prompt action. The man was aware that Hanshirō was very fond of *sake*, and so he thought that the best way of acting would be to induce him to drink himself tipsy and then to rob him while he was in a dead sleep. Consequently he urged Hanshirō to help himself to *sake* freely.

Hanshirō saw what was intended and his fertile mind immediately hit on a method of outwitting his fellow-traveller. He perceived that by first feigning to be tipsy and afterwards pretending to be asleep he could catch the man in his own trap.

So, after taking as much *sake* as would have intoxicated most men, but which owing to long use and great strength of constitution had no serious effect on him, Hanshirō pretended to be quite tipsy. He sang songs and shouted, much to the annoyance of the guests in the next room, who remonstrated with him in vain, till at last he stretched himself out on his bed and pretended to fall asleep. His money lay near him beneath the quilt in a long bag, a part of which was under his body.

He had not been in that position long before his travel-

ling companion, creeping stealthily over, seized the money and was about to go off with it, when Hanshirō, raising one of his legs, placed it on the man's back and held him down, while he shouted :—" *A thief ! A thief !* "

Before the alarmed guests had entered the room, partly for his own and partly for the guests' amusement, Hanshirō had covered the man with a quilt, while he held him tight between his legs. The people of the house and the guests, after searching the room, said that there was no thief to be found anywhere. " Here he is beneath the bed-clothes ! " exclaimed Hanshirō.

" Nonsense ! " they replied. " The idea of a thief hiding beneath your quilt ! You are humbugging us ! "

" Come and see then," said he.

On removing the quilt they found the thief, looking as though he were in a vice between the gigantic legs of Hanshirō. He had his sandals on and all his equipments ready for taking a journey.

" As it is late to-night," said Hanshirō, " we will tie this fellow up to the post till daylight." Thus secured, the thief remained till the morning, when he begged hard to be forgiven.

Hanshirō's feeling of pity overcame his sense of justice, and, fearing nothing himself, it concerned him little how much others had to fear from the liberty which he was

granting to this robber. So, in an off-hand way, he said to the man:—"Death is the punishment the law assigns for the crime you have committed, but I will spare you. You may thank your stars that you have met with a man like me."

Here some of the guests at the inn interposed:—"It is not right of you, sir, to treat the man so leniently. He ought to have some mark put on him to serve as a reminder of his crime. Allow us to deal with him."

"Very well; replied Hanshirō; "as your sleep was disturbed by him last night, I suppose I cannot very well say no."

The guests took the robber and, after plucking the hair from one side of his head, they tattooed him on both the face and the head with ink. When they had finished, Hanshirō exclaimed:—"That will do! that will do!" Then calling the robber, he said to him:—"Let this be a lesson to you not to thief in future. Whenever an evil heart tempts you to steal, take a look at your tattooed face and say, '*I had better not.*'"

This little episode being over, Hanshirō set out on his journey and reached Marugame without any further adventures, where he resumed his duties at the fencing-school.



CHAPTER III.

Our story returns to the fortunes of the married couple who were left by Hanshirō in Edo in charge of Chōbei at the Musashi-ya, Bakurō-chō. I have already alluded to the easy life which Ichinojō had lived in Takata, and to his lack of all soldier-like qualities. When forced to make a living for himself and his wife, the deficiencies of his training came more and more to light.

Some days after Hanshirō had left, Chōbei came to Ichinojō one day and said:—"I think, sir, it is high time for you to commence something whereby to obtain a living. Being a *samurai*, I have no doubt you know how to fence, could you not open a fencing-school?"

"Goodness me!" replied Ichinojō, "I know absolutely nothing about fencing. How to brandish a sword I have no more idea than the man in the moon;* and my knowledge of spear-exercise is no better."

"Then" replied Chōbei, "I have no doubt you can write well, having been educated as a gentleman's son. Why not start a writing school?"

"That would be impossible", replied Ichinojō; "I write a very bad hand."

* Not strictly true, as Ichinojō did defend himself against the robbers for a while.

"Really!" exclaimed Chōbei. "Well—let me see now—what can you do to earn some money?" Chōbei turned his head now on this side and now on that, looking immensely puzzled for a few seconds, and then continued:—"If you will allow me, Sir, I will tell you how to make a living. The thing I am going to suggest though is somewhat arduous; but by acting carefully you can make it pay very well. I propose that you should become a purchaser of waste-paper and such like things."

To this the *samurai* consented, without realizing what the following of such an occupation involved.

"It will never do for you to have such a grand name as Shindō Ichinojō as a waste-paper buyer," continued Chōbei; "you had better change your name. And, to show that you are connected with me, the first syllable of your name shall be Chō; and the second hachi. Chōhachi, then, shall be your name."

Chōhachi took up his quarters in a *nagaya** near Chōbei's house, where he commenced his new life.

The first day, bearing with him a scale of rates at which he was prepared to purchase paper and other articles, which had been drawn up by Chōbei, Chōhachi set out on his rounds. Without opening his lips, he passed through the streets. As he walked along, he soliloquized thus:—

* A long row of houses under one roof.

"Ah! true is the saying :—(Among blossoms the cherry is the best; among men, the knight).† To think that I, who have been receiving two hundred *koku* a year, should have come to this! It is true that it was brought on by my own folly; but it is hard to bear nevertheless. Oh that I could forget that I was born a *samurai*! Though unknown to those I meet, the very sight of a military man makes me feel utterly ashamed of myself."

With his mind full of such thoughts, stealthily he crept along through street after street, only studying how he should get out of people's way. The consequence was that, though he carried a basket in which he was to have put the articles that it was intended he should purchase, no one took any notice of him, and he wandered on and on, till, when night-fall reminded him that it was time to retrace his steps, he found himself far away from Bakurō-chō, and without a notion of the direction in which it lay. So, not having the sense to ask the way, he paid two *sen* for a guide to conduct him back to his house.

On reaching his home, he found that Chōbei had just come over to hear how he had fared. Disappointed enough was the innkeeper to hear the result of his dependant's first day's toil.

† *Hana wa sakura-gi,*
Hito wa bushi.

The next day Chōhachi set out again ; but he found the same difficulty in adapting himself to his altered circumstances. Do what he would, he could not summon courage to call out, "Waste-paper ! waste-paper !" The words seemed to stick in his throat when he tried to utter them. But he determined to make an effort to familiarize himself with the call by repeating the words aloud in some unfrequented place where no one could hear him. So he went out to the fields at the back of the Asakusa temple, and in a lonely spot, where he thought no soul could overhear him, raising his voice to a high pitch, he called out :—" *Kami kuzu ya de gozai !—Kuzu wa tamari-masen ka ?* " *

Near the spot which Chōhachi had chosen for practising his cry some children were playing. Hearing a man shouting out "waste-paper," in such a funny place, they thought that he must be bewitched. "Come, come !" said one of the lads to his companions ; "here is a paper-buyer who has been bewitched by a fox ! Let us pelt him."

Whereupon they commenced throwing stones at Chōhachi ; who, running away as fast as his legs would carry him, exclaimed :—"This Edo is a bad place and no

* "The waste-paper man ! Have you no waste-paper ?"

mistake! Even the boys here can't let a stranger alone without molesting him."

Thus ended the second day's work; for Chōhachi was far too much upset by this occurrence to do anything more that day.

Chōbei was excessively amused by the account that Chōhachi gave of his experiences on his return; and, bursting with laughter, he said:—"It was quite natural that the boys should say what they did: for who would suppose that any one but a madman would be shouting 'waste-paper' in a place where not a soul resides? It is natural too for a man who has occupied your position to be ashamed to call out, 'waste-paper,' in the public thoroughfares. I can fancy how the words must stick in your throat. But you must try and get over this feeling. I will endeavour to help you out of the difficulty. There is a line of poetry which says:—

'The small trader who,
'Day by day,
'Acts as a clock.'

If a hawker or purchaser of small things goes by the same places at the same time every day, gradually his punctuality serves to tell people what time of day it is; and thus his regularity tends to attract attention to himself, first, and then to his trade. As he passes, people say, 'There goes

the paper-buyer !' or, 'There goes the tea-man ! It is no doubt such and such o'clock ;—it is high time to be cooking the rice for dinner ;' or, ' My husband will soon be home from his work ;' or, ' Ofusa will soon be back from school ;' and so there springs up a kind of intimacy between the residents and the punctual tradesman, which leads the former to prefer to carry on business with him rather than with any one whose visits have been less frequent or less regular. Thus it is that continual keeping at a thing brings its reward in the long run. Now there is little use in going, as you have been doing, through the grandest streets of the town. You should go to the back alleys and pass the same houses at the same time every day, and as you pass, speak a civil word to the inmates of the houses. Such as, ' This is a very cold day ;'—or, ' There is no doing anything such rainy weather as this ;' or,—' A busy time this, Mrs. Hikobei !' or, ' What a long spell of hot weather we are having !' Then, just before you take your leave, you should say :—' I suppose you have not any old scraps of paper to sell ? ' "

The next day Chôhachi started on his rounds again. Acting on Chôbei's advice, he went to the back alleys, and saluted the residents in a most civil manner.

But, knowing no other language save that in general use among *samurai*, and no civility but that practised by

gentlemen and ladies, his salutations were far above the heads of those for whom they were intended and often excited their laughter. The following is a specimen of the language which he used in addressing his would-be customers:—"To-day the weather is superb! That you and your august family are all in the enjoyment of health is a subject for the most hearty congratulations. I am Chōhachi, a paper-buyer who lives with a householder named Chōbei in the second ward of Bakuro-chō. I earnestly beg that you will be good enough to allow me to make your acquaintance.—Do you happen to have any old paper to sell?"

The old women in the back streets listened to his polite speeches without understanding a word, but were very pleased nevertheless; for they felt that his looks and gestures showed that he meant to be very polite to them. As he was civility itself, he went by the name of "The Civil Paper-buyer," and gradually people grew to be fond of him and preferred to deal with him rather than with any one else. Thus, as had been predicted by Chōbei, Chōhachi became unusually popular; and, with the advantage of Chōbei's advice in all matters of difficulty, he managed to maintain himself, his wife and a little girl who had been born to them shortly after their arrival in Edo.

CHAPTER IV.

THE uncertainties of life are so great that it is impossible to say from what affluence to what poverty men may fall. The events I am now about to relate afford a striking illustration of this.

One day, some seventeen years after Chōhachi had settled in Edo, he thought that it was incumbent on him to offer up his thanksgivings to Kwan-on, the goddess of mercy, for the blessings he had received. Though no more of a believer in supernatural help than most of the knights of his day, occasional homage to the gods being one of the recognized obligations of a gentlemen, Chōhachi felt that his good breeding demanded a certain amount of devotion. So, with a light heart, full of holiday rather than religious feelings, after arraying himself in his best clothes, Chōhachi set out for the Asakusa Kwan-on temple, where he made his contributions to the priests and offered up thanksgivings to the goddess.

After this, with the intention of worshipping at Ueno, he started for that place and got as far as the foot of the little hill which leads up to the temple. Here he noticed that a number of beggars were asking for alms. One of them especially attracted his attention: partly because of the extreme poverty which his dirt and rags

seemed to indicate, partly on account of his wearing a *fukaamigasa*,* and partly owing to his having a crest on his ragged garments, which Chōhachi seemed to remember having seen somewhere at some time or other. On thinking it over, Chōhachi remembered the crest as that of his old friend in Takata, Ōhashi Bun-emon. With the object of inducing the beggar to speak, and of thus having a further opportunity of testing the correctness of his surmises, Chōhachi threw down a few coppers in front of him. These the beggar picked up, immediately thanking him for them in a most polite way.

Chōhachi no sooner heard the beggar's voice than he said to himself, "I am not mistaken. It is no other than Bun-emon."

Not wishing to confer with him in public, Chōhachi determined to follow the beggar to his lodgings and satisfy himself about his identity there. This he did; and found that he was living in an abominably filthy place. He occupied a small room in a very low class *nagaya*, which was inhabited by beggars of all ranks and grades, who at the time of Chōhachi's visit were engaged in practising over

* *It*: A deep braid-work hat: so made as to completely hide the face from view, resembling therefore the visor of the west. These hats were worn by men who had some special reason for not wishing their identity to be known.

their various arts and devices for obtaining money. Some were training birds, others monkeys ; some were dancing, others wrestling ; some were imitating the cawing of the crow, the screech of the owl, or the roar of some wild beast ; while others were raving with cranky voices the words of some old song.

On Chōhachi's making himself known to Bun-emon, for such the beggar proved to be, the latter gave him the history of his fall. Unlike that of Chōhachi, Bun-emon's fall had been brought about by no fault of his own. On the contrary, it was the result of the most scrupulous honesty on his part. Bun-emon related to Chōhachi how, as was so frequently the case in those days, his lord had surrounded himself with flatterers ; how these flatterers had combined against all the baron's most faithful councillors ; how in consequence of this one after another the best of his retainers had been dismissed from the baron's service, until he (Bun-emon) was the only one left ; and how that he had determined to hold on and endeavour to oust the flatterers from the position they had obtained, but that they had proved too strong for him. "I might," said Bun-emon, "have gone into the service of another lord ; but, as the saying is, 'A faithful servant can only serve one master,' so rather than take employment elsewhere I prefer to wait for the dawn of a

better day. I live in hopes of being able at some future time to return to the service of my first and only master, Echigo-no-Kami."

Chōhachi went home and told his wife what had occurred. The two agreed that, as they were now in a comparatively prosperous condition, it was incumbent on them to make a present of money to an old friend and benefactor who had been reduced to such abject poverty. To neglect to do this would be base ingratitude. The sum they fixed on as suitable to the occasion was twenty-five *ryō*; rather a large amount for a waste-paper buyer to provide, in fact, entirely too big a sum for Chōhachi to obtain in any ordinary way.

After consultation Chōhachi and his wife agreed that under the circumstances, painful as it might prove, it was their solemn duty to sell their daughter Kō. This they did, receiving the sum of twenty-five *ryō* for her.*

Shortly after, Chōhachi went one night to Bun-emon's house and with many apologies for the smallness of the sum, presented the twenty-five *ryō*.

"I appreciate fully the kind feelings evinced by the offer you make," said Bun-emon, "but I cannot think of accepting the gift. The help I gave you years ago was

* This was a very common practice in ancient Japan.

not afforded with the expectation of any return being made for the same.—I am not so poor but that, did occasion call for it, I could appear in the Shōgun's ranks all equipped for battle at a moment's notice. "Look here!" said he, producing a sword, a coat of armour and other weapons, which were all in good order, "I am not so poverty-stricken as my beggar's garb may seem to imply. I have no use for much money just now. What I receive as charity is ample to supply my few wants."

On Chōhachi's pressing the matter, Bun-emon grew angry, and said, "You know, Shindō, that having once said that he will not do a thing, no words of yours can make Ōhashi Bun-emon alter his mind. So please say no more about it."

Chōhachi, still continuing to press his acceptance of, if not the whole, at any rate a part, of the money, Bun-emon suddenly left the house, saying as he went, "Excuse me! I have some business that must be attended to at once."

Chōhachi took this opportunity of placing the money in the tobacco-box. Having done this, he forthwith left the house.

Bun-emon on his return discovered the money and was very much annoyed. "You," said he angrily to his wife, "woman-like, have been weak enough to allow this, have you. Why did you not return the money to Shindō

before he left the house? It is said that people are no longer themselves when they become poor. So I suppose you have been tempted by poverty to act in this way. But I am extremely grieved that such a thing should have happened."

The wife replied that she had not discovered the money till after Shindō had left the house. Bun-emon wished to return the money at once, but as neither he nor his wife knew where Chōhachi lived, this was impossible.

Bun-emon's wife, however, was a woman that had her wits about her; and, seeing that her husband was boiling over with rage at being left with the money on his hands, she addressed him as follows:—"That the money cannot be returned at once is very plain. That it is not well for us to keep so much money by us is no less plain. You have lately put one of your best swords into pawn. Suppose you redeem this sword by paying the sum borrowed out of this twenty-five *ryō*. After selling the sword you can make good this money again. By the time you have the money ready, Shindō will be paying us another visit, and will be only too pleased to hear that, failing to accept it as a gift, you have notwithstanding made some temporary use of his money. There is every reason for your doing something of this kind; as the

pawnbroker is constantly coming and saying that if we do not pay the money at once he will be obliged to sell the sword."

Bun-emon agreed to this plan ; and the next day he proceeded to the pawnbroker's shop. The said shop went by the name of the Aburaya and was kept by one—Gohei. The pawnbroker was absent, but his head-clerk, a man named—Kyūbei, of whom more anon, was at home ; and to him Bun-emon paid the sum of thirteen *ryō* fifty-six *sen* in redemption of his sword and other articles ; which articles he at once conveyed to his house in Yamazaki-chō.

On reaching his home, Bun-emon arrayed himself in his very best attire and went off to a rich baron's mansion to sell his sword.

Kyūbei, the pawnbroker's head-clerk, was extremely annoyed by the sudden arrival of Bun-emon at the shop for the purpose of redeeming the weapon. He knew that the sword was a very valuable one, and he thought that the money lent on it, though not a fourth of what the weapon was worth, was far too much for such a man as Bun-emon to pay back. So, up to the morning of its owner's arrival, he had looked upon the sword as belonging to his master, or rather as his own property ; for, to tell the truth, Kyūbei was a most dishonest servant and, having *carte-blanche* to do as he pleased in the business,

he took good care to give his master as few of its profits as possible. "By this redemption," he argued to himself, "I have lost certainly eighty, perhaps a hundred, *ryō*."

It is only with the worst of men that disappointment prompts to malicious action against the persons who have in some way been instrumental in bringing it about. Kyūbei, however, was such a man. So enraged was he by the loss of the sword that he at once determined to give vent to his chagrin by ruining the man who had robbed him of his spoil. Bun-emon's poverty would have shielded him from the attacks of most men occupying the position of Kyūbei. To wish to persecute the powerful and the rich, when for some reason or other they have excited hatred, is a feeling which is shared by a large number of human beings, but the cases are rare in which a man who is begging his bread becomes the object of a malicious attack, and especially when no result of the persecution can be looked for beyond the imprisonment or perhaps the death of the offender. But a life full of evil deeds had made the dastardly heart of Kyūbei capable of all this and of much besides, as will be seen later on.

No sooner had Bun-emon left the shop than Kyūbei resolved that he would accuse him of theft. Knowing that the greater the theft the more certain would be the ruin of the accused, and having determined that, to make

up for his disappointment in not getting the sword, he would relieve his master of the sum of money which Bun-emon was to be accused of thieving, Kyūbei fixed the amount at one hundred *ryō*. Of this sum Kyūbei took immediate possession, and set out the same afternoon for Bun-emon's house, to accuse him of having stolen the money when he came to the shop to redeem his property.

When Kyūbei reached Yamazaki-chō, Bun-emon had not returned from the baron's mansion, whither, as will be remembered, he had gone to sell his sword. Before entering Bun-emon's house, Kyūbei, anxious to pick up some little information whereon to found his accusation, chatted a little with the beggars who were lounging about near the entrance of the house, with most of whom his occupation had made him familiar. From them he learnt that Bun-emon had been seen going away that afternoon, decked out like a fine gentleman, and that people were wondering where he obtained the money to purchase such grand clothes, being only a beggar by profession.

"*Just the kind of information I wanted,*" exclaimed Kyūbei. Entering Bun-emon's house, he forthwith accused him to his wife, Masa, of having stolen that very morning the sum of a hundred *ryō*, "And," said Kyūbei, "in my opinion, my master is not the only one who has been robbed by your husband; for it is not to be supposed that

a man in Bun-emon's reduced circumstances could obtain in any honest way money enough to pay to a pawnbroker thirteen or fourteen *ryō* at one time, in addition to buying fine clothes in which to go swelling about the city like a grand gentleman whenever he takes it into his head to do so."

Masa, seeing at once that what had occurred might easily give rise to suspicion in the case of any one so poor as her husband, after indignantly denying the charge of theft, proceeded to relate to Kyūbei how it happened that Bun-emon was in the possession of so much money. "It was a gift", she said, "from a waste-paper buyer named Shindō Ichinojō."

Her story was no sooner finished than Kyūbei inquired where the donor of the twenty-five *ryō* lived.

"This, I am sorry to say, I cannot tell you," replied Masa.

"*There* you are!" exclaimed Kyūbei. "The idea of any man receiving money from a person whose place of residence he does not know! Moreover, the name of the person who, you say, gave your husband the money was never that of any waste-paper buyer in the world. Such a name as Shindō Ichinojō when applied to a grand gentleman sounds natural enough, but used of a waste-paper buyer, what does it sound like? - why, a fictitious name,—which I have no doubt it is."

To these retorts Masa replied with spirit and tact. But neither her arguments, her tears, nor her anger made any impression on Kyūbei. He still persisted in affirming that her husband was a thief and that he would have him sent to prison.

In the midst of this altercation Bun-emon returned. Kyūbei at once met him with the words:—"You are a thief!"

The day had been when the utterer of such words in Bun-emon's ears would have paid the price of them then and there with his life-blood. But Bun-emon had assumed the garb and was living the life of a beggar and, though as valiant a knight as ever brandished a sword, he was shrewd enough to know that the ignominious social position to which his reverses had driven him to descend demanded that the proud carriage and self-assertion of a great baron's retainer, in receipt of an income of five hundred *koku* a year, be exchanged for the humble mien and cringing manners of the beggar, in as far as this was possible. He therefore, with extraordinary self-restraint, quietly but earnestly denied the charge brought against him, and asked what Kyūbei meant by such an insolent accusation.

As we have already indicated, Kyūbei had set his mind on ruining the man who had come between him and his gains. Bun-emon's remonstrances and arguments there-

fore were alike wasted on such a man. He treated them with undisguised contempt. The only answer he deigned to give to Bun-emon's remarks consisted of a repetition of the charge.

The clerk's rudeness became more and more unbearable—his insulting speeches more and more galling, till at last he called out with a loud voice, "Bun-emon! You are a big thief! You are an obnoxious fellow!"

Bun-emon could contain himself no longer. "Say that again," he retorted, "and you shall die on the spot."

Again the offensive epithets were repeated.

Bun-emon's rage knew no bounds. Springing up, he drew his sword and, rushing at Kyūbei, tried to cut him down; but the latter, accustomed to flight, was out of the door in an instant. Bounding away through the street, he set up a cry of, "*Murder! murder!*" Bun-emon followed him closely, but did not get near enough to reach him with his sword.

Alarmed by the cry, the people came flocking out of their houses to see what was the matter. The two men had not proceeded far before they encountered some watchmen* on their rounds, who saw at once what was

* The chief duty of watchmen in those days was the apprehension of thieves and incendiaries. The system of night and day watchmen which preceded the present police system in England corresponded to the ancient constabulary organization of Japan.

taking place, and tried to apprehend Bun-emon. But he was a powerful man, and though he had no inclination to use his sword against Government employees, he was annoyed by their interrupting him in his chase after Kyūbai, so, one after another, he tossed them from him, as though they were no heavier than feathers. But, assembling in force, they at last succeeded in binding him. He was taken off to the nearest guard-house, and it was decided that, pending inquiry into his case, he should be imprisoned.

His wife was allowed to remain in her house, but was placed under strict surveillance.





CHAPTER V.

WATCHED from morning to night and from night to morning, Masa could do nothing but lament that the twenty-five *ryō* which had led to all this misfortune should ever have been brought to the house. "Cruel fate seems to have set us up as a mark for its arrows!" she exclaimed. "When will Heaven be propitious to us? Misfortune upon misfortune seems to be our lot! From wealth to poverty; from poverty to disgrace, or, it may be, to an ignominious death! Such is our life!—But need I despair? Though we have lost everything besides, our integrity we retain. Could it but be known that we are upright; that no dishonesty has characterized our actions; that no meanness has tarnished the purity of our hearts; there would not be wanting men who would vindicate our cause, who would readily become the instruments of bringing about the triumph of right over wrong, of virtue over vice. A thought strikes me! The *Bugyō* of this city, Ō-oka Tadasuke, Echizen-no-Kami, has the reputation of being the most discerning judge who has ever presided over a court. It is said that no amount of artifice ever embarrasses him. In a moment he sees through the subterfuges of the wicked and brings the truth to light. Could I but gain access to him, I am sure he would

vindicate my husband's cause and punish this villain Kyūbei. But watched as I am, I fear there is little chance of my being able to do this. Yet I do not despair. Something may occur to throw my keepers off their guard; and then I will fly to the house of Echizen-no-Kami."

It was not long after these thoughts had been passing through Masa's mind that, on the twelfth of December, A D. 1719, a fire broke out in the neighbourhood of her house. Her guardians, who consisted of the landlord and the inmates of the *nagaya*^{*} in which she resided, were busily engaged in moving out their goods. "Heaven has granted my request!" exclaimed Masa, when she saw what was taking place. Speedily she seized the money which her husband had left behind and his two swords, and, strapping the box that contained his coat of armour to her back, she rushed out of the house.

The landlord saw her making her escape; and, running after her, exclaimed:—"The fire is not coming here. You need not run away. Come back! come back!"

* It was customary in these times for the landlord and inmates of houses to receive orders from the Government not to allow persons suspected of or implicated in crime to leave their dwellings. This custom proved beneficial: in that it made the landlords of houses careful as to the persons they received as tenants, and the tenants themselves on the look-out against such misdemeanours in their neighbours' conduct as were calculated to bring trouble on all who resided near them.

He soon overtook her and, laying hold of her clothes, was about to lead her back to the house. But she was a determined woman, and had made up her mind to die rather than be defeated in her purpose, so, drawing one of the swords that she bore, she brandished it right and left with such power and skill that her pursuer thought it was as much as his life was worth to approach her; and consequently allowed her to escape.

But the very casualty which made it possible for her to escape from the house in which she was confined now impeded her progress step by step. The streets were thronged with people who had come out to see the fire. Masa, jostled from side to side in the crowd and hindered by the weight and cumbersomeness of the box of armour which she carried on her back, despaired of ever getting to the residence of the *Bugyō*, when suddenly loud voices arrested her attention. "Make way! make way! make way for Ō-oka Echizen-no-Kami, the City *Bugyō*," shouted the Mayor's body-guard.

No words could have been more welcome to Masa at that moment. Just as she was despairing of being able to go to the house of the man who she was sure would prove her deliverer, he was actually on his way to her.

"*Now or never!*" she exclaimed; and, pushing with all her might, managed to reach the spot where the

popular Mayor and Chief Magistrate was proceeding on horseback to the seat of the fire.

Tadasuke had lately organized forty-eight fire-brigades; and, partly to see how the firemen worked, partly in his official capacity as the head of the police of those days,* he put in an appearance on this occasion.

Masa determined to make her request known to the *Bugyō* by some means or other. Hearing that he was a compassionate man who never turned a deaf ear to a cry of distress, she resolved that she would arrest his attention, even though it involved her acting somewhat rudely. With this intention, she strained every nerve to get near Tadasuke's horse, but was thrown to the ground by the pressure of the crowd. And there she lay on the road which the feet of the Mayor's horse were about to tread when this great Officer approached.

No better position could she have chosen, had it fallen to her lot to choose, for attracting the *Bugyō*'s attention. The kindly feeling of that noble-hearted man was immediately stirred by the picture of helplessness and utter forlornness which Masa presented as she lay on the ground with the box on her back and the swords in her hands.

* At this time the *Bugyō*, in addition to their numerous municipal and judicial duties, used to perform the functions of the heads of police: functions now performed by the *Keishi-Sōkan*.

"Help that woman, will you!" said the *Bugyō* to one of his retainers.

No sooner was Masa lifted from the ground by one of Tadasuke's followers than she seized the bridle reins of the *Bugyō's* horse and, despite the angry remonstrances of his attendants, refused to relax her hold. Looking up into the Mayor's benevolent countenance, she said:—"Please, my Lord, I have an important matter to speak about, which concerns my husband's life. I humbly beg your Honour to lend an ear to my tale."

"The woman is mad," said one of the attendants.

"Obstinate creature!" exclaimed another.

"Drag her away!" added a third.

"Let there be no rough handling of this woman," commanded the *Bugyō*. "There is something important connected with her husband which she wishes to relate to me. This I am willing to hear; but as nothing can be done in this hubbub, let her be placed in charge of the nearest *nanushi** till I send for her."

Directly the fire was over, Tadasuke went in person to the place to which Masa had been sent—a practice of which he was very fond; for there was no one more given to breaking through the conventionalities of official life than he. "Your request that I would lend

* The head of a city-ward or a village, now called a *Kochō* or *Sonchō*.

an ear to your tale is granted," said the *Bugyō* to Masa.
 "I have now come to hear it."

After expressing her gratitude for his condescension, Masa related the tale of her many misfortunes to the *Bugyō*.

At its close he asked why she carried such a heavy box about with her.

"This," she said, "contains my husband's armour."

Tadasuke ordered the box to be opened. On being informed that it was locked, and that Masa did not know what had become of the key, Tadasuke told his retainers to call a locksmith to open the box.

"Why call a locksmith?" asked one of his followers.
 "Why not break open the box?"

"Nothing of the kind shall be done," said Tadasuke.
 "My being one of the City *Bugyō** does not give me the right to injure another person's property."

The locksmith was called and the box was opened. It was found to contain a fine coat of armour and beneath it a small paper parcel: this last immediately caught the *Bugyō*'s eyes. The package was sealed at each fold of the paper to prevent any but its owner from opening it, and on the outside the following words were inscribed:—"
Money carried by Ōhashi Bun-emon† Minamoto-no-Kiyozumi to the battle of Sekigahara, in the fifth year of Keichō."‡

* *Vide supra*, page 71, foot-note.

† The grandfather of the man mentioned in this tale.

‡ A.D. 1600.

On the paper being opened, it was found to enclose gold coins* to the value of one hundred *ryō*.

It was customary in those days for soldiers to carry money with them to the field of battle. This money was designed to serve for funeral expenses, if they were killed; for doctor's bills, if they were wounded, or to cover personal expenses during a long campaign. In feudal times each soldier of any rank bore his own expenses in time of war. This was the condition on which he received grants of land from his lord.

To return to our story, Tadasuke was immensely pleased to be in possession of the fact which the contents of the box had revealed. He was a man who was always on the look-out for the display of virtue in the lives of the poor and the persecuted, and posterity is indebted to him for bringing to light hundreds of noble actions which but for his painstaking investigations would have been consigned to lasting oblivion. "Here," said the *Bugyō*, "is a case of a man who, notwithstanding his extreme poverty, forbore to spend the money which was bequeathed to him by his ancestors. He kept it for some occasion when his services might be required in defence of the Shōgun." Then, after looking well at the swords, Tadasuke

* *Koban*; a coin equal to four *bu*. The sum mentioned would be the equivalent of about 500 *yen* at the present day.

continued :—"These swords are not the swords of an ordinary soldier. Bun-emon is doubtless a knight of wide renown. Would such a man thief?—*Never!*" Turning to Masa, he said, "Your case shall have my attention at once."

Tadasuke lost no time in summoning the parties concerned. Among them the first persons examined were the pawnbroker Gohei, and Kyūbei, his clerk.

The first question the *Bugyō* put to Gohei was :—"For what time precisely do you lend money on security?"

"In accordance with your Honour's august decision*, for eight months;" replied Gohei.

"If this be so, why was Bun-emon informed that after the fifth month, in case his goods were not redeemed, they would be forfeited?"

"I have not the least idea;" replied Gohei.

"Nonsense!" exclaimed the *Bugyō*. "Fancy a pawnbroker ignorant of his own business!"

"The arrangement of such details as your Honour is inquiring about, I intrust to Kyūbei," replied the pawnbroker, "and therefore I beg that your Honour will examine him in reference to them."

* This referred to a regulation which had been recently issued bearing on loans.

On being questioned about the matter, Kyūbei said, "It is true that eight months is the fixed time, but at Bun-emon's request I made it five."

"Well there are fools in the world, indeed!" observed Tadasuke, laughing. "Who would have thought that such a man as Bun-emon could be found? While allowed to keep the money for eight months, if convenient to do so—to bind himself to return it in five! A rare man this Bun-emon!—Well, we will take it for granted that such a man really exists, and suppose that what happened was just what you represent. The next question I have to put has reference to the hundred *ryō*. What proof have you that Bun-emon took the money?"

"The proof I have is this," replied Kyūbei; "the day before the sword and the other articles were redeemed, Bun-emon came to our shop and begged me to be lenient with him. It was on this night that the money was found missing. The next morning Bun-emon brought the thirteen *ryō* and redeemed his property. Now it is not to be supposed that in one night a beggar such as he could by any fair means procure such a sum of money.* When

* It will be observed that in several particulars the account of what occurred given here differs from that given some pages back. The most natural way of explaining the discrepancy is to suppose that Kyūbei altered his tale when under examination to make it sound more plausible. Nothing is said in the early account about Bun-emon's having gone to the shop the day previous to that on which the redemption of the articles took place.

I inquired where he had obtained the money, his answers were all most evasive, and I could get no satisfactory information out of him. I told him that I would let him off the thirteen *ryō* if he would return the hundred which he had taken, but he refused to do it. In fact he was so angry with me for accusing him of the theft that he tried to kill me."

Here Tadasuke cast a scrutinizing glance at Kyūbei. The marks of tattooing which were visible on one side of his head close to the temple did not escape the Magistrate's keen eyes. This combined with several unprepossessing features of Kyūbei's face were pretty sure indications to one so versed in human physiognomy as Tadasuke that Kyūbei was not the man he pretended to be. His bare-facedness seemed to the Chief Magistrate to be like that of one whose heart had been hardened by a life of crime.

"Your answers become more and more unsatisfactory," observed Tadasuke. "As the thirteen *ryō* were due to your master, and not to you, what right had you to exonerate Bun-emon from payment?"

To this no answer was given.

"Have you any proof," continued Tadasuke, "that the thirteen *ryō* paid to you consisted of coins taken from the hundred *ryō* which you say were stolen? Did you

place any mark on the coins of which the hundred *ryō* consisted by which you might know them again?"

"I did not," replied Kyūbei.

"Then your assertions are all without an iota of proof," said the *Bugyō*; "and more than this, you appear to be a rogue yourself. You evidently have not dealt honestly with your master's property." Then, turning to Gohei, he added:—"Gohei, see that this man does not leave your premises. You are responsible for his re-appearance at Court."

Orders were given to the city authorities to take care that Kyūbei did not make his escape.

Bun-emon was now called and closely examined. After minutely questioning him in reference to everything which had taken place, the *Bugyō* said:—"Bun-emon, there is not one particular in which your account differs from that given by your wife Masa."

The *Bugyō* was thoroughly convinced that Bun-emon was not the thief. But he thought it best not to set him at liberty till the real criminal was discovered. "I am sorry," he said to Bun-emon, "that I have to send one who has acted as you have back to prison. But the law leaves me no alternative."

The next step Tadasuke took was to endeavour to find out who was the donor of the twenty-five *ryō*.

With this object, he sent orders to those heads of the city wards whom it concerned, to the effect that all the waste-paper buyers residing in Bakurō-chō, Yokoyama-chō and the vicinity of Ryōkoku-bashi were to appear at Court on a certain day.

The waste-paper buyers, all in a great state of alarm as to what had occurred, on the appointed day made their appearance at Court. Bun-emon was directed to scan them narrowly, to see whether Shindō Ichinojō was among them.

A look of bitter disappointment came over the face of the brave knight as he finished scrutinizing the men before him. "Alas!" he sighed, "it seems as though fortune was never going to smile on Bun-emon again." A tear was seen to steal down his cheek as he said:—"I am sorry, sir,—but Shindō Ichinojō is not among the men whom you have been good enough to summon."

"I am sorry too," replied the Judge; "but I will try other means of eliciting the truth."

The reason of the non-appearance of Chōhachi was that, having some business in Marugame connected with a younger brother of his who had taken up his residence there, and being anxious to see his old friend and benefactor Hanshirō, he had gone to Marugame some time before the summons was issued to the waste-paper buyers.

Chōhachi spent some days in conversing with Hanshirō. Hanshirō decided that he had lived long enough in comparative obscurity, and that he would do well to go to Edo and set up a fencing-school there. So, entrusting his Marugame fencing-school to one of his pupils and bidding farewell to his friends, in company with Chōhachi, he set out for the Shōgun's capital.

On their arrival at Chōhachi's house in Bakurō-chō, his wife exclaimed:—"I *am* glad you have come. I did not know how to wait for your return. There has been no end of fuss here! In the beginning of December it was reported that a *samurai* residing in Shitaya had been accused of theft and arrested; and some days after, all the waste-paper buyers of this neighbourhood were summoned by the *Bugyō* to appear at Court. I am very much afraid that the money we gave to Bun-emon has been the cause of all this trouble. But, not knowing Bun-emon's address, I could not inquire into the matter."

The next morning Chōhachi held an interview with Masa and, after learning from her what had happened, promised to appear at Court as a witness and vindicate her husband's honesty.

Chōhachi now lost no time in conferring with Chōbei and Hanshirō as to the steps it was necessary for them to take to prove Bun-emon's honesty and to bring Kyūbei

to justice. Chōbei was for writing a polite letter to the *Bugyō*, stating just how things stood and offering to give information on the case. But Hanshirō, on hearing how Kyūbei had acted and that as yet he had not been punished for his misdemeanours, proposed that he should go to the pawnbroker's, and, taking the law into his own hands, should administer some wholesome reproof in the form of heavy blows on the back of the offender, previous to their reporting Chōhachi's arrival to the authorities. In order to carry this out, he induced Chōhachi and Chōbei to show him the way to the pawnbroker's shop.

"Do you go and confer with him first," said Hanshirō, "and if he is troublesome, call me."

This they did; Hanshirō waiting very impatiently outside, till at last, being summoned, he dashed into the house, and before Kyūbei, who was a great coward, could make his escape, seized him and tumbled him about like a nine-pin, cuffing him with his hands and knocking his head against the floor. "An outrageous villain of a clerk, indeed!—stealing your master's things, and, not content with this, imputing your crimes to others!—Do you think you are going to be let off?—Not a bit of it."

"Please, Sir Knight, forgive me! please forgive me!" cried the clerk. "I will do anything you bid. Please spare me! I will tell the truth! Really I will!"

"See that you do then," replied Hanshirō. "If you don't, you know what to expect."

The three men returned to Bakuro-chō, and at once sent in a request to the authorities that they might be called as witnesses in Bun-emon's case.

The next day orders were received from the *Bugyō* summoning every person residing in Gohei's house, with the exception of Kyūbei, to the Court.

On their appearing, a young man named Jūsuke was the first to be examined. He stated that he was twenty-one years of age, and had been in the service of Gohei for the space of ten years.

"You are a persevering young fellow to remain in one place so long," remarked the *Bugyō*. "Has any one been dismissed from Gohei's service within the past few years?"

"Yes;" replied Jūsuke, "a friend of mine, one Tōsuke, was dismissed last June, on account of his suffering from eye-disease."

"What is Tōsuke doing now? How is he situated? Has he parents living? Is he married?"

"He is not doing anything to maintain himself. He is a single man, residing with his sister; and has no parents living."

"How old is his sister?"

"About eighteen."

"How do they manage to live? Does any one supply them with money?"

"That I do not know."

"I suppose you are in the habit of paying visits to inquire after Tōsuke's health from time to time? Tell the truth, if you please, and hide nothing."

"I do not pay such visits."

The *Bugyō*, now turning to Gohei, said :—"As Tōsuke is an old servant of yours, I dare say you visit him sometimes?"

"No;" replied the pawnbroker, "I do not go myself, but I think Kyūbei often goes."

"Very good;" replied the *Bugyō*, making a note of the answer given by Gohei. "Now you may all go with the exception of this little boy," pointing to a small boy called Sankichi, aged ten years, who was employed by Gohei, and had come to the Court with the other members of the household.

The boy was very much alarmed by being detained in this way, and commenced to set up a bellowing in the Court House.

"Come, come!" said the *Bugyō*. "There is nothing to be afraid of. Here, look! I have a *mamjū** for you."

* A cake, made of wheat-flour, sweetened with sugar, and having mashed beans in the centre.

Don't be shy. Eat it, that's a good boy! I have kept it for you specially, because you are such a clever little fellow."

When Sankichi had finished eating one of the cakes, Tadasuke gave him another, and then allowed him to play about a little in the Court House, until the child felt quite at home with the officer he had dreaded so much. After praising him a little more, the *Bugyō* commenced:—"Now, there are some matters about which I wish to ask you. Be sure you tell me the truth about everything; if you don't I will not send you back to your parents, nor shall you go to the Aburaya any more. Now you very often go to Tōsuke's house in company with Kyūbei, eh? You see how well we officers know what you do!"

"To be sure I do," said the boy. "How does the honourable *Bugyō* get to know about such things, I wonder? Well, I like to go to Tōsuke's house with Kyūbei, because Kyūbei always has a smiling face when he goes to Tōsuke's, whereas when at the pawnbroker's he is often very cross."

"Ah, to be sure, that is very natural," observed Tadasuke.

Tadasuke thought there was little doubt that Kyūbei had made the inmates of this house his confidants and that the money stolen was intrusted to their care. So, his object being to find out exactly where the house was

situated without its getting to the knowledge of Kyūbei that he was on the scent, he continued in the same strain of pretended omniscience:—"In going to Tōsuke's house, you go-away-up there." Here the *Bugyō* made a motion with his head in a way that to a sharp adult would have appeared to be very indefinite, but which to the unsuspecting and admiring mind of the child seemed to indicate that the place was well known to the speaker. He then continued, "You then turn and go to a back house."

"Exactly," exclaimed Sankichi. "It is behind a fruiterer's house, and to the left of a large well."

"To be sure!" replied the *Bugyō*; "and a little further on than the well, eh?"

"It is! it is! Well, I never would have thought it! if the honourable *Bugyō* does not know everything!"

"You are a clever boy!" replied the *Bugyō*. "Now you may go home. But, look here! You are not to say a word about anything that you have mentioned to me. Remember that now!—If you say anything, I shall be sure to hear of it. For the *Bugyō* knows everything, you see!"

"I will not say anything about it, sir"; replied the lad, and forthwith returned to the pawnbroker's house.

After Sankichi had been in the house some little time, Kyūbei came to him and asked:—"Why did the *Bugyō* keep you back? What did he say to you?"

Sankichi remained quite silent.

Whereupon Kyūbei angrily put the same question to him again. But not a word did the wary lad utter, thinking that Echizen-no-Kami might be listening somewhere, as he seemed to know everything.

Kyūbei's suspicions were now thoroughly aroused. "Things are beginning to look ugly," he muttered to himself. "This lad evidently knows something that he will not reveal, and Hanshirō too is a man who is not to be deceived. I had better think about absconding, or I shall find that it is too late to do so. But if it comes to this, I may as well carry off a little more than I have already appropriated; as the saying is:—'If you eat poison lick the plate.'^{*} I will secure all I can and be off."

So that night Kyūbei stole into the pawnbroker's shop and, taking all the most valuable things he could find, made them up into a parcel; and then, going to the place where the money was kept, he quietly took possession of the moderate sum of three hundred and fifty *ryō* (equal to over fifteen hundred *yen* at the present day), and, after girding on a sword (one of the best that was in pawn), was just making his escape when, in one of the verandas of the house, he encountered his master's only son, a young man,

* "'Tis as well to be hung for a sheep as a lamb," conveys the same idea. The original is, *Doku wo kuruwaba, sanz made namero.*

then about twenty years of age, who was somewhat demented. "Ah, Kyūbei!" exclaimed the son in a loud voice. "Where are you off for at this time of night?"

"The devil take it!" ejaculated Kyūbei to himself. "I shall be discovered through this fool! *There*—die; you idiot!" he muttered between his teeth, as thrusting his sword into the young man's mouth, he killed him on the spot.

Pushing the murdered man's body under the veranda, Kyūbei made his way out of the house as rapidly as possible. But there happened to be a watchman passing at the time, who just caught a glimpse of him as he glided out of the door. The whole thing was so rapid that Kyūbei thought it was hardly possible that the watchman could have seen him. So, instead of running away, he crouched down behind a water-tank, where he hoped to conceal himself till the man had passed. But the watchman's suspicions were aroused and, summoning several of his companions, he walked up to the spot where Kyūbei was secreted and arrested him on suspicion.

Ever ready with his tongue, Kyūbei tried to induce the men to release him. But on his clothes being examined, they were found to be covered with blood, and so deception became an impossibility. The inmates of the house were aroused, the murdered man was found, and the incident was at once reported to Ō-oka Tadasuke.

Kyūbei had now forfeited his life by this last criminal act. Nevertheless Tadasuke was anxious to induce him to confess that he was the perpetrator of the crime which he had imputed to Bun-emon but of which overwhelming evidence went to show that he himself was the author.

The state of the law in Japan in those days was very peculiar. However conclusive the evidence to show that a certain person had committed a crime might be, unless that person confessed his guilt orally and was prepared to set his seal to the confession when written out, no punishment could be assigned. This regulation proved to be one of the most powerful inducements to a judge to make use of torture. The work of a judge, with the law in the state it then was, whenever an obstinate criminal was under trial, became most tedious. In order to expedite matters, recourse was had to torture. With Echizen-no-Kami, however, torture was one of the last resorts. He first tried every other means imaginable to elicit from criminals a confession of their guilt. And he was usually successful. The lengthy questioning, the heaping of evidence on evidence to which Tadasuke resorted in the present case to induce the criminal to confess his guilt, would occupy too much space if reproduced in full here, though as a proof of the wonderful perseverance and ingenuity of the judge they are well worth careful examination in detail. I shall content myself with just stating

the outlines of the process adopted by the *Bugyō*, not to convict Kyūbei of crime, for that was a comparatively easy matter, but to induce him to confess his guilt.

It must not be forgotten that Kyūbei's case was a very peculiar and an extremely difficult one. The prisoner was a doomed man. No power on earth could rescue him from death. Seeing that die he must, there seemed no reason why he should be expected to gratify the authorities by giving evidence in Bun-emon's case. But more than this, there still lurked in his heart the most deadly enmity to Bun-emon. And the knowledge that his enemy was likely to perish by the hand of the law, was the only solace which his heart, in the depth of its depravity, was capable of appreciating, and therefore the only solace for which he longed. If he could only feel that he was not to perish alone but that Bun-emon would follow or precede him to the land of shades, he would die contented, if not happy. Tadasuke thoroughly understood all this and effectually counterbalanced it.

After the disclosure of Kyūbei's latest crime, the first persons examined in reference to Bun-emon's case were Chōbei and Chōhachi; the next Tōsuke and his sister Tami; and the last Hanshirō.

In the course of the examination of Hanshirō it came to light that Kyūbei was no other than the robber whom

Hanshirō encountered on the road to Marugame and who was subsequently tattooed by the guests at the hotel nearly twenty years previously.

Kyūbei stood in mortal fear of Hanshirō. Hanshiro's piercing eye, knowing looks, and huge physical development were things of which the criminal had the most unpleasant recollections and before which he quailed with instinctive dread. So, though the *Bugyō* heaped argument on argument to prove to Kyūbei that it was useless for him to try and hide his crime, it was not till Hanshirō came to address him that he began to relent. The *Bugyō*, seeing the way in which Kyūbei shrank from Hanshirō, gave the latter full power to deal with him. And so it happened that partly by threats, partly by appeals to such sparks of virtuous or manly feeling as remained unquenched in a heart so totally depraved, Hanshirō induced the prisoner to confess that he stole the one hundred *ryō* and to place his thumb on the written confession of his guilt.

The judgment delivered as given in the *Ō-oka Meiyō Soden* reads as follows:—

(1) "Gohen, the landlord of the Aburaya, you, having, though unwittingly, harboured a thief in your house, are to be blamed, and might be punished severely. Treating you leniently, however, I decree that you pay one hundred *ryō* to Bunzemon.

(2)—“Tōsuke, you, in addition to giving shelter to a robber, having made use of money that was obtained unlawfully, also merit heavy punishment. But, on account of your blindness, I take pity on you, and do no more than require you to pay a fine of seven *kwammon*.²

(3)—“Tami,† you, for maintaining your brother when he was nearly blind, are to be commended. For this you are to receive the sum of five *kwammon*.

(4)—“Musashiya Chōbei and Gotō Hanshiro, you have rendered great assistance to Shindō Ichinojō and various other persons. These actions of yours are worthy of the highest praise. As a remuneration for the same, I award ten silver *ryō* to each of you.

(5)—“Chōhachi, your remembrance of the kindness you received from Bun-emon even after the lapse of years, was most commendable. For this I award to you the sum of five *kwammon*.

(6)—“Ko, the daughter of Chōhachi, you were obedient to your parents. In consideration of this, the sum of five silver *ryō* is awarded to you.

(7)—“Kyūbei, you, having stolen your master's money, and, afterwards, having imputed the crime to Bun-emon; and having subsequently been guilty of murder and theft,

² Seventy cents then, the equivalent of five or six times that amount now.

† Tōsuke's sister.

in addition to committing various other crimes previous to the forementioned ones, are condemned to be exhibited throughout the streets of Edo and then to be crucified at Asakusa.

(8)—“Ohashi Bun-emon, you are declared guiltless. You are to receive the sum of one hundred *ryō* from Gohei, twenty-five of which is to be expended in repurchasing the daughter of Shindo Ichinojō.”

The above verdict is a curiosity regarded from a modern point of view. The rewarding of virtue as well as the punishment of vice was one of the functions of a Court of Justice under the Tokugawa *régime*. There is a queer mixture of law and sentiment in these judgments. They reflect very distinctly the spirit, the morality, and the social customs of the age in which they were passed.

The practice of selling daughters to a life of shame whenever money was needed for some special emergency is publicly praised by Tadasuke; and Kō is commended and rewarded for having bowed to one of the most degrading of practices, though the probabilities are that she had no choice in the matter.*

* It is stated in the account given of this case in the *Ō-oka Meiyō Seidan* that Tadasuke advised that in making proposals to her owner for the repurchasing of Chohachi's daughter a conciliatory tone should be adopted. This remark shows that the law of those days was powerless to compel a brothel keeper to restore a girl to her parents or guardians.

There is something romantic about Bun-emon's having awarded to him the very sum which he was accused of stealing.

Now, to bring my story to a close, I am pleased to be able to state that the events recorded above reached the ears of Echigo-no-Kami, Bun-emon's former lord, and that he was so impressed by what he heard of Bun-emon's conduct on this occasion that he decided to reinstall him in his former position and grant him an income of five hundred *koku* a year.*

The conduct of Hanshiro was reported to the Shōgun, Tokugawa Yoshimune, who was so pleased with it that he ordered Hanshirō to be summoned to his presence. When he arrived, the Shōgun set him to fence with the chief swordsmen of his Court, and on his defeating eighteen noted fencers in succession, he created him a *hatamoto*,† and granted him an income of two hundred *koku* a year; which was subsequently increased to five hundred.

Thus ends a story in which human nature is displayed in a variety of aspects, its bright and its dark side, its nobleness and its baseness forming strong contrasts to each

* Equal to an income of 3,000 *yen* at the present time.

† A name given to the Shōgun's immediate vassals, knight-banneret is the nearest English equivalent to *hatamoto*, though the duties of the latter differed considerably from those of the former.

other in the lives and the characters of the principal actors and actresses who have appeared on the stage.

The curtain drops : but to rise again and reveal other scenes and new performers in the drama of old Japan.





APPENDIX TO TALE II

The following authentic stories give a very good idea of the wonderful ingenuity exercised by Ō-oka Tadasuke in discovering crime or in extorting confessions of guilt from those who were brought before him for trial.

I.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century there was among the men-servants of Oyamada Shōzaemon a man called Naosuke.

This Naosuke, late one night, crept into the room where his master slept and killed him, his wife and three children with a sword. He was not able to get the money he wished to take, however, owing to the arrival of some neighbours on the scene.

Naosuke escaped and, after knocking out two of his front teeth and disfiguring his face and arms, he changed his name to Gombei, and obtained employment in a rice shop in Kōjimachi, Edo, the owner of which was one Sanzaemon.

Five or six years after the murder it was suspected that Gombei, though so much altered, was the author of

the crime. So he was arrested on suspicion. The officers who examined him were convinced that Gombei was the murderer, but they could get no satisfactory evidence wherewith to convict him; so they applied to Tadasuke, asking him to help them in some way to find out the truth.

Tadasuke summoned Gombei to his presence; and on his appearance, addressed him as follows:—"For an innocent man like you to be accused of murder by Government officials, is most lamentable. Having been tortured so much, you will find great difficulty in using your limbs for some time. Here, take this." Thus saying, Tadasuke gave Gombei five *ryō*, and told him to do the best he could with them. Gombei was overcome with delight, making sure that his life was safe. When his spirits were at their height, and he was entirely off his guard, Tadasuke called out suddenly, "Naosuke!"

Gombei turned and answered, "Yes." Tadasuke instantly commanded his attendants to seize him: which they did, just as he was trying to steal away.

Gombei found it impossible to hide his crime any longer. His having unwittingly answered to the name of Naosuke, was, he knew, sufficient to prove his identity; so, seeing there was no way of escape, he confessed his guilt, and was condemned to be crucified.

IX.

It happened once that a robber who would not confess his guilt was brought before Ō-oka Tadasuke. He was asked to try and devise some means of inducing him to confess. Tadasuke had a large box brought into the Court House, and gave orders that the thief's wife should be placed in the box before his eyes. Then he had the box removed to an adjoining room, and caused an officer to be put into it in the wife's stead.

When the arrangements were complete, the box was again brought into the Court House, and Tadasuke addressed the robber as follows:—"As you refuse without punishment of some sort to confess the crime that we are sure you have committed, instead of administering to you the usual torture, I decree that you carry your wife once around the town." The man put the box on his back and set off around the town. When he reached an unfrequented spot, where he thought that no one would hear him, he exclaimed:—"I say, wife, crime is a thing that ought not to be committed. What trouble it brings us into!"

Here the officer sprang out of the box, and uttering the words, "*Go jōi*," as is usual in the case of an arrest, took the man into custody. Having thus committed himself, the thief was no longer able to conceal his crime.

III.

When Tadasuke was one of the mayors of Edo, in that part of the Kanda district known as Otamagaike a man called Hachibei kept a shop in one of the back streets, where he sold all kinds of old metal pots.

Hachibei, by dint of much effort, had realized the sum of fifty *ryō* by his trade. Not knowing of any better place in which to put this money, he concealed it in his pickle-jar. He was living in what is called a *nagaya*; which consists of one long building divided up into different parts to suit the convenience of the poor tenants who inhabit it. As a large number of people were residing in this building, some one soon discovered that the money was concealed in the pickle-jar. And the discovery was no sooner made than the money was stolen.

One day, when Hachibei went to see whether his money was all right, what was his astonishment to find it gone! The poor man was in the greatest distress. This blow seemed to break his heart. He went to the owner of the building and told him what had happened. The landlord was very sorry, but said that he did not know what to do. He advised Hachibei to have another look for the money as it might be in the jar after all. Hachibei said that further search would be useless, and that he thought the matter ought to be carried into Court at once.

"Of course the matter should be reported," said the landlord, "but how it can be carried into Court I do not know. What case can be made out of it? Who are you going to accuse?" Hachibei pleaded hard; saying that if this money were not recovered, he would not know how to go on with his business. So, to satisfy him, the landlord requested Ō-oka Tadasuke to institute an inquiry into the matter.

After hearing the case, Tadasuke said to Hachibei:—
"Your idea of putting the money into the pickle-jar was a good one, and had you not kept going to the jar to see if it was safe, doubtless no one would have discovered it was there. But your constantly going to the jar created suspicion, and led to its being stolen. Have you any remembrance of anybody's seeing you take it out of the jar?"

"I have no remembrance of any one's seeing me do it," replied Hachibei. "But I think that the person who stole it must be some one who resides in the same building with me, for it is not likely that a stranger would look for anything valuable in a pickle-jar."

"*There* you are right;" said the Magistrate, "and it is very annoying that a person like yourself who has after much trouble succeeded in making fifty *ryō* should lose it in this way."

Here the landlord stepped forward, and said :—"If you please, my Lord, this man is in a very distressed state owing to the loss of his money. He talks about killing himself. What to do with him I do not know. I humbly and respectfully beg that your Exce'llency will do him the favour of looking into the matter."

"You may go for the present. I shall send for you again," replied Tadasuke.

Two or three days after, a letter reached Hachibei commanding him to appear before Tadasuke. It was also added that every person in the *nagaya* in which Hachibei lived, man, woman, or child, was to appear at Court.

On the day appointed, the people who occupied the same building, one and all, made their appearance. Tadasuke opened the inquiry by stating what had occurred. "Hachibei," said he, "a seller of old metal, some little time ago took some money which belonged to him and, putting it into a linen bag, concealed it in a pickle-jar. This money has been removed from the jar by some one or other. Although people might be inclined to call this a theft, I have little doubt that its removal was not a premeditated act, but that somebody who was going to the pickle-jar came across the money accidentally, and suddenly, before he knew what he was about, was overcome by a desire to carry it off. Very likely the man or woman

who took it went to the jar intending to take a few pickles and, seeing the money, carried it off. Anyhow the person who took the money must have put his or her hand into the pickle-jar. And doubtless the smell of pickles, associated as it is in this case with the removal of the money, will still remain on that person's hand. By going round to each one of you and smelling your hands, then, I shall discover who has taken the money. But before I do this, there is one thing I wish to say, which is this: If the person who has taken the money waits till I come and discover him or her, that person's crime will be considered to be a great one; but if the guilty party comes forward and confesses what he or she has done at once, I shall deal leniently with that person."

Here Tadasuke put on a severe and somewhat angry face, and prepared to rise. Just at this juncture a man in one of the back seats smelt his fingers.

Whereupon Tadasuke exclaimed:—"How wonderful it is that a man who is conscious of having done wrong should carry the smell of his misdemeanor in his fingers! Though some days have elapsed since the deed which defiled the heart was perpetrated, that smell evidently adheres to the hand of him who committed it! There is no need to inquire into the matter any further."

Here, pointing to the man who had smelt his fingers, "You," said the Magistrate, "have taken the money."

The man, feeling that after his unconscious act had revealed the truth it was useless to seek to hide it any longer, confessed that he was the offender and begged for forgiveness.

This tale, says the narrator, well illustrates the truth of the saying, "What is within the heart is sure to make itself known by some outward act." *Unconscious* acts often reveal *conscious* guilt.

IV.

Some two centuries ago it happened that a woman who was acting as a servant in the house of a certain baron had a little girl born to her which she found it difficult to attend to properly while in service; so she put it out to nurse in a neighbouring village, and paid a fixed sum *per mensem* for its maintenance.

When the child reached the age of ten, the mother having finished her term of service, left the Baron's mansion. Being now her own mistress, and naturally wishing to have her child with her, she informed the woman who was taking charge of it of her wish. The woman was reluctant to part with the child. She was a very intelligent little girl, and the foster-mother thought that she might get some money by hiring her out to work. So she informed the mother that she did not wish to part with her. This of course soon led to a quarrel. The disputants

went to law about it, and the case came up before Tadasuke.

The woman to whom the child had been intrusted actually asserted that it was her own offspring, and that the child's mother had no right to it whatever. Tadasuke saw at once that the dispute was one which could be settled in no ordinary way, so he commanded the two women to place the child between them and one to take hold of its right hand and the other of its left, and each to pull with all her might. "The one who conquers," said the *Bugyō*, "shall be declared the mother of the child."

The real mother disliked immensely this mode of settling the dispute; therefore, though she took hold of the child's hand, as she was bidden, fearing that the girl would be hurt by violent pulling on both sides, she slackened her hold directly the foster-mother began to pull, and allowed the latter to get an easy victory.

"There!" said the foster-mother, "the child, you see, is mine."

Here Tadasuke with a loud voice interposed:—"You are a deceiver. The real mother of the child, fearing that it would be hurt by the dragging, intentionally relaxed her grasp on its hand. But you, who are in no way attached to the child by nature, thought only of over-

coming your adversary, and cared nothing for the feelings of the girl." Tadasuke then commanded the foster-mother to be bound. She, thinking that she would be tortured if she remained silent, immediately confessed that she had been attempting to deceive them and asked for pardon.

The people who were present said, "This judgment is founded on a principle of human nature." The principle referred to is that of parental affection. The absence of this in the one woman and the presence of it in the other enabled the Judge to discover who was the real parent.

It is on account of this story that Tadasuke has been called, "The Japanese Solomon."

V.

In his *Monji-no-Shirube* Mr. B. H. Chamberlain relates at considerable length a famous case tried by Ō-oka Tadasuke called *Yubi Te-jō-no-ken*, "The Case of the Man Whose Thumbs were Tied." It turned on a loan of money, alleged to have been made to one Hachirobei by a man called Chiko. Hachirobei denied that he had borrowed the money. Enticed by his peridy, the old lady set fire to her house. The case came before Tadasuke and after lengthy inquiry, he came to the conclusion that the old lady had actually lent the money and had been badly treated by Hachirobei. So as the latter obstinately refused

to confess his guilt, Tadasuke addressed him as follows:—
“When I was a child,* we used to have a charm against forgetfulness. It consisted in tying up the thumbs with paper, which infallibly brought the matter to one’s recollection. Practise that charm upon Hachirobei.” So they took his right and left thumbs, placing them one on the top of the other, wrapped paper round them, and put on the official seal, after which his lordship said:—
“Now Hachirobei, try hard to recollect! And I warn you that if you tear the paper in the very least you will be committed to gaol. You will be examined every other day, and mind you do not fail to appear!” Thereupon both parties were dismissed.

My lord Ō-oka had quickly seen to the bottom of Hachirobei’s heart, divining that though not a particularly wicked man, he had been led by greed to refuse repayment of the nun’s money. The thumb-tying which ensued prevented Hachirobei from sleeping at night and from feeding himself at meal times; above all; it interfered with his taking pen in hand to balance his accounts, and made everything more uncomfortable for him than can be imagined. He was really at his wits’ end, when, after

* The translation to the end of the story is that of Mr. B. H. Chamberlain, as given in the Sixth Section of his book under the title of “A Tale of the Good Old Days” (p. 143 *et seq.*).

the lapse of seven or eight days, he was again summoned to attend and was addressed as follows:—

“How goes it, Hachirobei? Has the loan of the three hundred *ryō* come to your recollection? No doubt you never repaid it, though you thought you had. Seeing it was that money that led Chikō to commit arson, she cannot be executed until the matter is cleared up. So make haste with your pondering!”

Hachirobei could endure no longer. “My lord!” said he, “careful investigation of my ledgers has brought to light an entry of ‘Borrowed three hundred *ryō*’; and though no name is attached, I make no doubt that the item referred to is the sum borrowed from Chikō.”

“Then you admit that you borrowed it from Chikō?” inquired the judge

“Yes, my lord, with all due respect, I admit it.”

“You borrowed the three hundred *ryō* seven years ago; so the sum will now amount to over five hundred *ryō*, allowing interest at the rate of three *ryō* a month. You must refund the whole of this. However, as it may inconvenience you to produce the entire sum at once, you shall pay it back at the rate of twenty *ryō* a year in four instalments of five *ryō* each.”

Having thus charged Hachirobei, his lordship was pleased to inquire Chikō's age, and on being informed she

was sixty-three, he said:—"Well, you will receive the five hundred *ryō*, principal and interest, in the manner I have just directed Hachirobei—year by year. When the whole debt shall have been settled, you will be executed."

To the proprietor of the house where she lived he said, "Give notice at once if Chikō dies, but no coroner need be sent for."

This sentence brought the whole matter to a close. The reasons underlying it were that at the rate of twenty *ryō* a year, it would take twenty-five years for the whole sum of five hundred *ryō* to be received back by Chikō, who was then already sixty-three years of age; while, furthermore, the order simply to report her death without holding a coroner's inquest was dictated by the desire to save her from the capital punishment due to arson. The result of the judgment was to impress not only the policemen and constables, but the whole city with admiration for my lord Ō-oka's mercy and wisdom, and it became very famous.

VI.

As throwing light on the methods and on the qualifications of certain high-class Japanese magistrates a hundred years before Tadasuke's time, the following story relating to a famous Kyōto Chief-Magistrate is of considerable interest.

Itakura Shigemune asked some of his friends one day what was thought of his mode of discharging the duties of a judge.

"Some," they replied, "when they see how much force and severity there is in your countenance are afraid to say what they otherwise would, and hence the real truth is not always elicited."

"I have been wrong," said Shigemune. "Henceforth when I go into Court I will have a tea-grinder placed behind a screen, and while grinding the tea I will hear the cases. In deciding on legal cases there should be an absence of personal feeling. If the mind is composed, the judgment is clear; and if the judgment is clear, then everything becomes plain. In future I will determine the state of my mind by the rate at which I turn the tea-grinder. When my mind is calm, the tea-grinder will go slowly; and when it is excited, it will go fast. Persons' faces are not all alike. Some are attractive, and others repulsive. A judge, however, should not be influenced by outward appearances, but be guided by evidence alone. When he allows the outwardly attractive or repulsive to influence him, he is sure to be prejudiced in the wrong direction; therefore I will use a screen and a tea-grinder."

Thus we see that a tea-grinder was used by Shigemune as a psychometer, or mind-measurer.

Itakura Sihgemune was made Mayor of Kyōto A.D. 1619.



JAPAN IN DAYS OF YORE.

III.

THE LIFE OF MIYAMOTO MUSASHI.

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

THE military and moral code known as *Bushidō* was elaborated and reached the height of its fame during the Kamakura era (A.D. 1185-1333). With the fall of the Hōjō family and the assumption of power by Ashikaga Takauji the system grew lax in various ways. Takauji's own power being founded largely on disloyalty, this Shōgun naturally treated traitorous acts with indifference. He neither punished those who left him nor refused undesirable persons who wished to fight under his flag. Thus the fine old knight's ideal of Kamakura days was no longer respected during the lives of the first two Ashikaga Shōguns, Takauji and Yoshinori. But the third Shōgun, Yoshimitsu (A.D. 1368-1393), to a certain extent succeeded in reviving interest in the *Bushidō*. He appointed such men as Ogasawara Nagahide, Imagawa Noritada and

Ise Sadayuki to draw up regulations to be observed by all knights; and instructors in archery, horsemanship, fencing, etc. were encouraged in diverse ways. During the last years of the Ashikaga Shōgunate* various schools of fencing came into existence. For instance, in Shimōsa, Iizasa Yamashiro-no-Kami invented a style known as the 天真正傳神道流, *Tenshin-seiden-Shintō-ryū*†. He alleged that the two great war gods Kashima and Katori had graciously condescended to make known this method of fencing. Among the pupils of Yamashiro-no-Kami was Tsukahara Tosa-no-Kami, whose son Tsukahara Bokuden became a fencer of great fame in those days. Bokuden, first practised a style known as the *Shinkage-ryū*; but he subsequently invented a style of his own known as the *Mute-kachi-ryū* (The Handless Victory Style.)‡ Bokuden used to go around the country for the purpose of giving lessons in his style, and it is recorded that on these occasions he travelled like some rich nobleman, with some 100 attendants and with spare horses led along for his use on the road.

The art of fencing was doubtless much improved at this time by the diligence in studying various styles shown

* The last Ashikaga Shōgun was Yoshiaki, whose deposition took place in 1573.

† "The genuine and correct Heaven-revealed Divine style."

‡ For an amusing story bearing on this title *vide Appendix*

by those warrior-pilgrims known as *musha-shugyōsha*, who went around the country with sword or spear for the purpose of fencing with all experts whose fame had reached their ears. When they won in a match they became the instructors of their defeated opponents. When they were beaten, they became the pupils of their betters. Thus a very high state of proficiency was reached. The cause of chivalry generally was doubtless greatly advanced by the action of three great barons who were contemporaries and for some time rivals of Toyotomi Hideyoshi, Takeda Shingen, Uesugi Kenshin and Hōjō Sōun, who all subjected their retainers and dependants to very strict discipline. In order to give some idea of the kind of rules under which warriors lived in the days of Miyamoto Musashi, whose many adventures I am about to relate, I furnish here a literal translation of Katō Kiyomasa's seven ordinances, which were doubtless scrupulously observed by Musashi during the latter part of his life.

I. "In service there must be no negligence of any kind. Rising at 4 (*tora no koku*), the warrior is to practise fencing with the sword and the spear before breakfast. After breakfast the forenoon is to be occupied with archery, musket practice and horsemanship. Those who are proud of their masters and serve them well will be rewarded with extra grants of land.

II. "As pleasures knights should choose hawking, deer-hunting, wrestling, and the like.

III. "Dress is to be of cotton or pongee. Extravagance in dress and consequent embarrassments in living will be regarded as a misdemeanour. A warrior must take delight in his military equipment above all other things, and should be economical in time of peace, so as to be able to spend freely in time of war.

IV. "On all ordinary occasions a knight is not to invite more than one guest at a time. Intercourse with one friend and with his master is enough for a warrior. His food is to consist of unhulled rice (*kuromeshi*)*. On occasions when fencing matches or other military exercises are taking place, there is no objection to his meeting a number of people.

V. "A *samurai* must know military etiquette thoroughly. But the study of showiness in ordinary life will be regarded as a misdemeanour.

VI. "Unsheathing a sword under the influence of liquor or as a mere idle amusement is strictly forbidden. To draw a sword is to threaten other persons. From this practice serious disturbances often arise. Those who

* In this connection it is implied that the guest was to be regaled with the same homely fare.

use their swords merely as playthings or for purposes of intimidation will be ordered to commit *seppuku*.*

VII. "The warrior must give his whole mind to study, reading books on the military arts and on loyalty and filial piety. Verse composing and verse-linking (*Haikai no renga*),† since they tend to encourage pretence, showiness, and the like, are forbidden. Such practices are certainly effeminate and ill suited for the man whose ambition it is to live and to die a brave warrior. A warrior must give his whole soul to the study of war and to his duties as a knight, in order that when he dies he may die in a superior way. It is only by cultivating the warlike spirit continually that the knight can reach a high ideal.

The above ordinances are to be strictly followed day and night. If there be men who find these regulations too stringent for them to observe, their cases will be inquired into, and on its being found that they have deliberately declared themselves unable to perform manly duties, they shall be branded, so that all may recognize their inferiority."‡

* Disembowelment, called also *harakiri*.

† For a description of the process *vide* my "New Life of Toyotomi Hideyoshi, p. 363 *et. seq.*

‡ The branding of criminals was much practised in the Tokugawa era. In No. II of this series of Tales, p 107, a case is given in which private persons tattooed a thief and then let him go free. The story reminds one of the branding of Milady in the "Three Musketeers." But a brand as a mark of effeminacy is certainly rare in any country if not altogether unique.

Of all the military rules in force in these warlike times perhaps those of Uesugi Kenshin were the most remarkable. It was an established law in this baron's dominions that the greatest of all disgraces which could overtake a *samurai* was to have his sword cancelled by his lord. It once happened that one of Kenshin's retainers had committed an offence which called down upon him the extreme penalty of the law. He was ordered to deliver up his two swords and to be solemnly expelled from his lord's castle. But certain of his comrades interceded with Kenshin and pointed out that there were extenuating circumstances in the case of which their lord had not taken note. So Kenshin was induced to reduce the sentence to an order for suicide; to be carried out in the usual fashion. This decision gave general satisfaction to the guilty man and to all his friends, and was regarded as a proof of the extreme generosity of Uesugi Kenshin.

It appears then that the "Way of Chivalry", or the *Bushidō*, consisted of two things:—(1) High culture of the warrior's mind; (2) the most assiduous study of all military arts. But the ordeal to which a warrior of these times was subjected was an extremely severe one and many a knight passed his days in perpetual fear that he might live to disgrace in some way or other the illustrious name by which he was known among men. The feelings with

which not a few *samurai* regarded their position are well expressed in the following verse :—

*Toreba ushi ;
Toraneba, mono no kazu narazu ;
Sutsubeki mono wa,
Yumi-ya narikeri.*

To take to arms, is to be constantly solicitous.
Not to take to arms, is to be a nonentity.
Among things to be rejected
Is the military profession.*

The warrior had to be prepared not only to die himself but to risk the sacrifice of wife and children as well, for there were occasions when the extinction of whole families was ordered.

At the time of which I am now writing the vendetta received general approval and was never more universally practised throughout the country. The number of vendetta cases which originated with a defeat in the fencing ring that, instead of being borne in a manly way, was resented and prompted the worsted man to some dastardly act such as that committed by Sasaki Ganryū in the tale I am about to tell, was very large. In such instances the sympathy of the public was naturally with the men

* *Yumi-ya, lit*, bows and arrows, is here put for the profession of a soldier. *Mono no kazu narazu*, is to be unworthy of being counted; hence quite insignificant. The conclusion come to by the writer of this verse was that the warrior's life has more drawbacks than recommendations.

who avenged the deaths of parents, brothers or other near relatives. Not all the influence of the *Bushidō* was powerful enough to prevent the commission of mean and cowardly acts by certain *samurai*. Precautions were taken against crimes such as that perpetrated by Sasaki Ganryū. Before fencing matches began, which were very frequently held in the presence of the *Daimyō* governing the province in which they took place, it was customary to publicly remind the combatants that defeat in a match should not be allowed to engender personal hostility to the victor. The existence of such a practice as the vendetta must of course be regarded as a proof of the imperfect administration of the law in old Japan. But it is only fair to state that while the authorities did not succeed in suppressing this form of lynch law, they certainly controlled it in many ways—often punishing those who had killed their foes without reporting their intentions to the proper Government officials or without complying with other regulations in force at that time. On the other hand, where, as in the case of Miyamoto Musashi, the Government regulations were conformed to, the act of vengeance was regarded by leading Government officials with complacency.

The skill with which the Japanese used the sword at this time is constantly alluded to in Chinese annals. The Japanese depredators who visited the coast of Shantung

and other provinces, known in China as *Wo-kou* (倭寇), "Japanese foes," were a perfect terror to the inhabitants of villages lying on the sea-coast. Chinese writers even refer to the practice of using two swords at one time in the manner described in this tale. Wherever the Japanese swashbuckler appeared, the Chinese, we are told, fled in terror; as the rapidity and skill with which his weapon was handled was such that no Chinaman was a match for him. Into the broad subject of sword manufacture and ornamentation I cannot go here.

In a paper written for the Asiatic Society of Japan entitled, "The Sword of Japan : Its History and Traditions," published in Vol II of the Society's Transactions, Mr. T. R. H. McClatchie says, "There is perhaps no country in the world where the sword, that 'knightly weapon of all ages' has, in its time, received so much honour and renown as it has in Japan. Regarded, as it was, as being of divine origin, dear to the general as the symbol of his authority, cherished by the *samurai* as almost a part of his own self, and considered by the common people as their protector against violence, what wonder that we should find it spoken of in glowing terms by Japanese writers as 'the precious possession of lord and vassal from times older than the Divine period,' or as 'the living soul of the *samurai*?'."

The ornamentation of sword handles and engraving on the blades were arts that were brought to a high state of perfection prior to this time. Of the Japanese words used for a sword the *ken*, a long straight, double-edged weapon; is the oldest form. It is said to be between seven and eight hundred years old. The modern *katana* is a single-edged weapon. The *wakisashi* was a short dirk, worn with the *katana* as a sign of gentle birth in olden times. The *wakisashi* it was that was used for committing *harakiri*. It was then presented to the principal in a small square tray made of white wood such as is used in temples. Hence the point of a verse written at the time of the Revolution:—"The gift I wish to present to my lord of Aizu is nine and a-half inches on a temple tray."*

One of the names Japan bore in ancient times was the land of "Many blades." The metal used by Japanese swordsmiths, was certainly of a very superior quality and the art of forging weapons was in a highly advanced state at the time of which I am writing. Even in recent years it has been the practice of many Japanese officers when ordered to the front to exchange their foreign blades for well tested Japanese ones--the Japanese metal being in their opinion so much more reliable. In ancient times

* The *daik*, which was formerly of greater length, was lessened to about nine and a half inches prior to the Meiji era.

the profession of a swordsmith was deemed very honourable and many persons belonging to good families joined it. In an article in the *Nichi Nichi Shimbun* published a few years ago it was maintained that the old art of sword manufacture is in danger of being forgotten. The writer deploras the loss to the country that this would involve.

The following tale concerns fencers and fencing. It may perhaps be said that the day for the employment of this art with any effect having passed, there is little interest attached to the various styles of fencing practised in ancient times. But, apart from the light they throw on the opinions, feelings, tastes and modes of life of the personages introduced into the narrative, such stories as the following show that the imaginative or inventive faculty of the Japanese was not as dormant in ancient times as we are sometimes led to suppose, and hence they cannot but be of special interest to all who aim at obtaining some idea of the various phases through which the native mind has passed in reaching its present state. The day has not arrived for the preparation of an exhaustive history of purely Japanese art.* The materials for such a history, however, are being steadily, if slowly,

* Since these words were first penned nearly 20 years ago, Captain Brinkley's elaborate work on Japanese art has been published. But though very full, it does not claim to include everything by any means.

prepared. When the collection and classification of facts bearing on this subject have been completed, and the results of the researches of the scholars now giving their attention to the matter are made known to the world, we shall be in a position to decide with certainty to what extent and in what age most effectually the noblest of all man's faculties, the imagination, was cultivated in Japan. That certain military arts were pure Japanese inventions is unquestionable. Some of the styles of fencing alluded to in the following narrative display a considerable amount of inventive genius.

The life of Miyamoto Musashi, on account of its being full of the most exciting adventure, and in that it is the history of a man who for over twenty years with unflagging zeal and dogged resolution pursued one object, is well worthy of finding a place among the portraits of ancient Japanese life that I am now preparing. It is undoubtedly the most entertaining of the numerous vendetta stories which appear in ancient Japanese books, and as such bears being translated somewhat fully.

In the eighty-eighth section of the *Hakkenden*, Bakin furnishes us with an account of the various weapons of war used in China and Japan in ancient times. As an introduction to the record of a life spent in fencing, I give an epitome of this account.

"In China there were from ancient times eighteen military arts. They consisted of the use of:—(1) the bow¹; (2) the cross-bow²; (3) the spear³; (4) the sword⁴; (5) the double-edged sword⁵; (6) the lance⁶; (7) the shield⁷; (8) the broad-axe⁸; (9) the axe⁹; (10) the halberd¹⁰; (11) the bludgeon¹¹; (12) the basket-work shield¹²; (13) the straw shield¹³; (14) the bamboo-spear¹⁴; (15) the pitchfork¹⁵; (16) the iron-bar¹⁶; (17) the rope-hook¹⁷; (18) sleight, or tricks¹⁸.* To these must be added the use of clubs, guns, slings, and the like, and wrestling.

"If we come to ask why the number of military arts was fixed at eighteen, we find that it was owing to a man called 李通, Ritsū [flourished about A.D. 1460] having given instruction in military arts under these eighteen heads.

"What are known as the eighteen military arts of

1. 弓, *yumi*. 2. 弩, *ōyumi*. 3. 鎗, *yari*. 4. 刀, *katana*. 5. 劍, *tsurugi*. 6. 矛, *hoko*. 7. 盾, *tate*. 8. 尖, *ono*. 9. 鉞, *masakari*. 10. 戟, *edahoko*. 11. 鞭, *muchi*. 12. 簡, *amitate*; made of twisted bamboo. 13. 編, *wara-ta'e*. 14. 叉, *takehoko*. 15. 叉, *sasumata*; pitchfork is the nearest English word. This weapon was used by constables in ancient times, and is employed by firemen in modern days. 16. 杷頭, *tsukubō*. These were made in various ways, some being knotted, others having sharp teeth. 17. 繩繩套子, *menjōtōbatsu*. This weapon was something like the Japanese chain-hook. The rope was used for throwing around and entangling a foe. 18. 白打, *yawara*.

* Bakin remarks that he is not sure whether his rendering of the Chinese characters in Nos. 12, 13, and 17 is correct.

Japan do not precisely correspond to those of China. There are, in fact, twenty-eight in this country; which are as follows:—(1) The use of the bow; (2) the use of the sword; (3) horsemanship; (4) the use of the hurling-sword¹; (5) the use of the spear; (6) swimming; (7) espionage²; (8) tricks; (9) the use of the gun, (10) the perforated-headed-arrow³, (11) the fire-arrow, or rocket, (12) the club, (13) the crook⁴, (14) the iron-bar, (15) the pitchfork, (16) maces, (17) beacons, signals, (18) and cannons.

“The additions to the above are as follows:—(19) Horseback target-shooting; (20) ordinary target-shooting; (21) horseback dog-shooting; (22) horseback cow-shooting; (23) river-crossing on horseback; (24) the art of drawing a long sword⁵; (25) the use of the chain-hook⁶; (26) horseback bow-shooting; (27) horseback gun-shooting; (28) duck-throwing. In very ancient times there were spears, but no lances; there were bows, but no guns. War tricks (war arts) were introduced into Japan about

¹ 日本書紀云、倭國古來有弓矢、其目、*hitime*. This term included all the operations by means of a bow and arrow, for the purpose of attacking enemies. 2 諜、called also *s. deginami* or *s. deginami*. 3 射、were used for sewing the sleeve of an armor. 4 鉤、were used for pulling round and round the weapon, and the word was also applied to the.

5 日本書紀云、倭國古來有弓矢、其目、*hitime*. This term included all the operations by means of a bow and arrow, for the purpose of attacking enemies. 6 鉤、called also *s. deginami* or *s. deginami*. 7 射、were used for sewing the sleeve of an armor. 8 鉤、were used for pulling round and round the weapon, and the word was also applied to the.

the beginning of the sixteenth century¹. The chain-hook has been in use in our country from ancient times. Nakatomi Kamatari killed a wicked minister of state with this weapon²."

Among all the above-mentioned arts that of fencing and *jūjutsu* (*yawara*) are the only two that have survived down to the present time, they are now practised more as gymnastic exercises in the national schools of the country than as military arts. The *naginata* or hurling-sword was much used throughout the Kamakura era and during the earlier part of the Ashikaga age, but after that it seems to have been abandoned by male warriors. But throughout the Tokugawa era this weapon was regularly used by women. The pitch-fork (*sasumata*) and the iron-bar (*tsukubō*) were used by constables for some time after they had ceased to be weapons of war. Archery was of course quite superseded by the employment of firearms in early Tokugawa days.

Much has been written respecting the Japanese form of athletic exercise called *Jūjutsu* or *Jūdō*. This form of

¹ Some say however, that this art was introduced by 陳元興 Chin Cempin in the seventeenth century. As explained by him, it consisted of knowing how to take people captive, but in what way he does not explain.

² With the exception of Nos. 24 and 28, the additions to the eighteen arts given above are entirely superfluous, consisting as they do of nothing but branches of the same arts.

exercise was known in feudal times and practised as a means of defence in case of a hand to hand tussle. It went by various names, *taijutsu*, *kogusoku* (小具足), *kempō* (拳法), *hakuda*, and *yawara*,* the last being the best known term. The origin of the term *jū* (柔) in *Jūjutsu* and *Jūdō* seems traceable to the fact that according to this art victory is gained by yielding or pliancy rather than by the output of strength. It is owing to this circumstance that it differs essentially from ordinary wrestling, though when watched it seems to many foreign observers to be indistinguishable from wrestling. The origin of *jūjutsu* is veiled in obscurity. Mr. Kanō Jigorō, the great modern authority on the art, in a paper read before the Asiatic Society of Japan in 1888 and published in Vol. XVI. of the Society's Transactions, does not favour the notion that the Chinaman named Chin Gempin, who came over to Japan in the second year of Manji (A.D. 1659) and died in the 11th year of Kwambun (A.D. 1671), was the originator of the art as far as Japan is concerned. Other writers on this subject as well as Mr. Kanō have pointed out that Chin Gempin did no more than introduce a Chinese method of boxing known as 拳法 (*kempō*), in which kicking

* Though, following Mr. Kanō Jigorō, I have given these names, it seems to me that they referred to different practices. The *yawara* only represented the modern *jūjutsu*.

as well as pushing and striking, was resorted to. It is indubitable that *yawara* was known in Japan long before Chin Gempin's arrival here. There is a passage in the Life of Miyamoto Musashi which describes his meeting with Sekiguchi Yazaemon, who was a famous teacher of *Jujutsu* at that time and the author of a special style of *yawara* called the *Sekiguchi-ryū*. Now Musashi died A. D. 1645, and his meeting with Yazaemon took place many years before his death. This of itself is sufficient proof that Chin Gempin was not the originator of the *Jujutsu*. Here is the opinion of Mr. Kanō and the Rev. T. Lindsay on the point given in the Asiatic paper referred to above:—
“It seems to us that the art is Japanese in origin and development for the following reasons:—(1). An art of defence without weapons is common in all countries in a more or less developed state, and in Japan feudalism would necessarily develop *Jūjutsu*.

(2). The Chinese *Kempo* and the Japanese *Jujutsu* differ materially in their methods.

(3). The existence of a similar art is referred to before the time of Chin Gempin.

(4). The unsatisfactoriness of the accounts given of its origin.

(5). The existence of Japanese wrestling from very early times, which in some respects resembles *Jujutsu*.

(6). As Chinese arts and Chinese civilization were highly esteemed by the Japanese, in order to give prestige to the art, *Jūjutsu* may have been ascribed to Chinese origin.

(7). In ancient times teachers of the different branches of military arts, such as fencing, using the spear, etc., seem to have practised this art to some extent.


In support of this position we remark first that *Jūjutsu*, as practised in Japan, is not known in China."

Messrs. Kanō and Lindsay gave an account of the five great schools of *Jūjutsu*: (1) The *Kitō-ryū*, (2) the *Kyūshin-ryū*, (3) the *Sekiguchi-ryū*, (4) the *Yōshin-ryū*, and (5) the *Tenjin Shinjō-ryū*. In some of the schools, in addition to the ordinary instruction common to all *Jūjutsu* establishments until quite recently two special methods were taught: one being *atemi*, the art of kicking or striking some parts of the body so as to disable or kill opponents, and the other *kuatsu*, the art of resuscitating those who have apparently been killed by violence. This latter art was considered a secret and was only taught to pupils who were far advanced in their knowledge of *Jūjutsu*, and only to those on the condition of their taking an oath not to divulge the secret to any one.

Mr. Kanō Jigorō prefers that the system taught by him should be known as *Jūdō* rather than *Jūjutsu*, as he

has made moral and mental training a leading feature in teaching *Jūjutsu*. His *Jūjutsu* may be said to have no rival in Japan at the present time, the system not only having been adopted by the Department of Education for athletic purposes in schools, but having also been selected by the Police as constituting necessary training for all constables. Hence there has been a great demand for the graduates of Mr. Kanō's School of Athletics all over the country for many years past.

Bakin says, or rather he makes one of his characters, Inusaka Keno, say that there are some other military arts that might be mentioned, besides those given above, but that he fears wearying his audience by going into further details. Actuated by a similar feeling, I will linger no longer on the threshold of my story, but at once proceed to relate the adventures of Miyamoto Musashi Masa-akira, the retainer of the Lord of Higo, Katō Toranosuke Kiyomasa, and the illustrious author of "The Two-Sworded Style."



CHAPTER II.

Among the retainers of Ashikaga Yoshiteru, the thirteenth Ashikaga Shōgun [A.D. 1546—1567], there was a man called Yoshioka Tarozaemon.* Tarozaemon was a good type of the knights of that time: brave and honest, a diligent student, as study went in those days, a kind parent and a steadfast friend. He was, too, an exquisite fencer, and one who had distinguished himself in battle over and over again.

Yoshiteru heard of Tarozaemon's skill in fencing; and, so at one time he assembled noted fencers from all parts of Japan and set him to fence with them. On this occasion Tarozaemon defeated some sixteen well-known fencers one after another. Yoshiteru, overcome with astonishment at the victor's great skill, bestowed on him the name of Mu-ni-sai, or the "Matchless one."

On the fall of Yoshiteru, his followers were scattered hither and thither, each one being forced to make a living as best he could. Munisai had a few acquaintances in the castle-town of Himeji, Harima; so he took up his residence in an outlying village of that town called Shimmi,

* The materials for the following tale have been mostly taken from an anonymous work called the 古今實錄英雄美談, *Kokon-jitsuroku-eiyūbidan*.

where he rented a small house for himself and his family and succeeded in making two ends meet by teaching fencing.

Munisai had two sons: the elder was called Seizaburō, and the younger Shichinosuke. Munisai was extremely fond of his children, regarding them as the greatest treasure he possessed. The elder boy was of a quiet, retiring disposition, which well accorded with a physical constitution that was by no means strong. The younger brother was from early days full of an almost superfluous amount of vivacity, daring and enterprising, quick in acquiring anything to which he applied himself. His father's mode of fencing early engaged his attention, and the readiness with which he imitated it astonished his neighbours and acquaintances.

At the age of twelve Shichinosuke found himself endowed with the intelligence of a man of twenty, and the bodily strength of a youth of seventeen or eighteen years of age. This led to his gradually becoming impressed with the idea that his equal was not to be found in Shimmi, even if elsewhere. Invariably coming off victorious, he eagerly sought for combatants among the young men of the village, with whom he fought or fenced as the case might be. Nothing delighted him more than to find himself pitted against a lad twice his own size. Though

so pugilistic, of the bullying spirit he had none; the weak he was always ready to help. Many a lad had to thank him for a speedy deliverance from his persecutor.

But this consciousness of superiority to others—this love of self-assertion in one so young led to self-will, conceit, and a total disregard of the rights of others. Complaints reached Munisai's ears from all quarters from men whose property or persons had been injured by Shichinosuke. Munisai was no indulgent parent. He had observed with natural pride numerous signs of his son's high endowments. The ability and courage which Shichinosuke had displayed on all occasions delighted no one so much as his parent. But at the same time Munisai saw very clearly that unless the lad was taught how to practise self-control, he would grow up worthless, if indeed, in those days of danger to human life, his career were not cut short by the sword of some expert fencer. Munisai repeatedly reproved Shichinosuke for his misbehaviour; but nothing that he said made the slightest impression on his wayward son. So he determined to try whether he could not frighten him into obedience.

Accordingly, one day, when Shichinosuke was at home, Munisai went out into his court-yard and commenced to throw dirks at a target. Munisai was extremely proficient in this art; but, with the object of exciting

Shichinosuke's ridicule, he purposely missed the target several times. Shichinosuke, seeing this, laughed aloud. Whereupon Munisai turned round and said:—"You abominable young scoundrel! How dare you laugh at your parent? Let me hear that again, and see whether I will not cut you in two pieces."

Without the slightest sign of fear, Shichinosuke replied:—"Though you are my parent, you surely don't think that I can help laughing at a thing of this kind. Were you not close to the target and yet missed it? Is not that enough to make any one laugh?" Here he burst out laughing again.

In an instant, Munisai's sword was drawn and, rushing at Shichinosuke, he made a fierce cut at him. The latter, as quick as lightning, dodged behind his father and avoided the blow. Round and round the yard ran the lad, swiftly followed by his father. Adroitly Shichinosuke avoided stroke after stroke. This made the father appear to be more angry still and led to his doing his utmost to intercept the lad's flight. Having succeeded in bringing his sword down within a few inches of Shichinosuke's head, the lad thought it was high time to make his escape; so he leapt over the fence and fled as fast as his legs would carry him.

Not far from Himeji there is a village called Nomura. In this village there was at the time of which I write a temple called the Kōshōji. The priest of this temple was the brother of Munisai's wife. Shichinosuke was in the habit of frequently visiting his uncle, so, being afraid to confront his father after what had occurred, he hastened to Kōshōji. He reached the temple in a great state of agitation: and his uncle, seeing this, asked:—"What is the matter? What makes you so flurried?"

Wiping the perspiration from his forehead as he spoke, Shichinosuke related all that had happened, and added:—"I have often heard people talk of my father's superior swordsmanship, but I had no idea he was so formidable. I am afraid to go into his presence again until he has forgiven me. Please go and ask him to pardon me."

"Do you mean to say that you have been all this time finding out that your father's swordsmanship is not to be matched anywhere?" asked the priest. "This is just your way of going on—as full of conceit as possible—with no respect whatever for your superiors! Munisai is at once your father and your teacher. The kindness with which he treats you is deeper than the sea and higher than Shumisen.* And yet—scamp that you are! you

* 須彌山, the Sanscrit Sumaru, a fabulous mountain of great height forming the axis of every universe and composed of gold, silver and other precious substances.

despise this paternal affection. I go and plead for you!— what am I to say?" Then, after a pause, he continued:— "Well, well! as you are my nephew I will do what I can for you, but the chances are against my succeeding."

Quickly the good old man wended his way to the village of Shimmi, for, to tell the truth, despite Shichinosuke's self-will and conceit, he was a great favourite of his uncle's. The numerous noble traits of the lad's character more than outweighing the imperfections to which I have alluded, the priest felt deeply interested in him.

"Shichinosuke has behaved in an outrageously impolite manner to you, I hear," commenced the priest to Munisai; "and I have no doubt you find it hard to pass over his offence. But since he is your own child, may I venture to ask you to pardon him this time? He has been very much frightened by what has occurred and is afraid to confront you unforgiven."

"I knew," replied Munisai, "that he would come to you, and therefore did not trouble about him. I am much obliged to you for your kindness to him. Though no doubt I look on him with a father's eye, yet it seems to me that Shichinosuke is no ordinary lad, and that if he lives to grow up he will make a name for himself some day. But lately I have noticed that he has been getting

more and more puffed up with conceit. He has no respect whatever for the opinions or feelings of other people. Vanity of this kind leads to remissness in duty, to the neglect of rules of etiquette, to all kinds of evil. I have repeatedly reprov'd him for his arrogance, but to no purpose; so I think it best that he should be banished from the house for a while. To act in this way may seem to you to proceed from want of parental affection; but in truth it is not so. It has more real affection in it than a less indulgent course could possibly have. Shichinosuke pays little attention to his books, I am sorry to say. As you know very well, learning and war are like the two wheels of a chariot: by means of these man makes progress. If one of them is lacking, the other becomes useless. I think that it is possible that you may be able to induce him to study. Do me the favour of allowing him to remain at the temple until you think he is thoroughly reformed. If you will thus oblige me I shall feel grateful to you for life."

To this the priest agreed. Returning to the temple, he inform'd Shichinosuke that his father was far too angry to receive him into his house, and that therefore there was nothing for it but for him to stay where he was; and that, as of course his remaining there idle was out of the question, he should expect him to apply himself

to books in right earnest. This Shichinosuke promised to do.

There was at this time in Himeji a renowned fencing-master, who boasted of the name of Arima Kiheiichi Ichiyōken Nobukata.* Nobukata taught a style of fencing known as the *Arima-ryū*. He had in accordance with the custom of those days spent years in traversing the country in order to perfect his style, and on the termination of his wandering had settled down in Himeji, where he had opened a fencing-school which was attended by some three hundred pupils, the elite of the neighbourhood being included among them. His popularity as a fencing-master is said to have been unprecedented in Himeji. Outside his door stood a notice painted in gold letters which stated that he was the originator of a style of fencing the like of which had not been known since the creation of the world.

One day, when sent on an errand by the priest, Shichinosuke happened to pass Nobukata's house, and this notice caught his eye. "What cheek!" exclaimed the lad. "One would think to see this notice that Nobukata was the only fencer in existence. I have heard my father say that the men who have originated styles of fencing

* This multiplication of names in many cases indicates pomposity.

are innumerable; and yet this man tries to make out that the style which he has invented is superior to everything else in the fencing line. It is rightly said that it is people's vanity that is the cause of their destruction. I will act in Heaven's stead and punish this man for his presumptuous folly."

So saying, Shichinosuke took his pen from the case in which it was carried and, mounting the water-tub which stood near the gate, wrote the words:—"The frog in the well knows nothing of the great sea,"* and by the side of it added:—"This was written by Yoshioka Shichinosuke, of the Kōshōji, Nomura."

Nobukata was giving his lessons as usual when his attention was attracted by a great hubbub at the gate. Something was evidently amiss. What could it be? He sent one of his pupils to see.

On hearing what had occurred, the fencer grew livid with rage. "The work of some abominable scoundrel!" he exclaimed. "He that defaces my sign-board is as though he defaced me. A reproach cast on the fencing that I teach! an insult to Arima the like of which never was!—Anyhow, we will see who is the better man,—and that with real swords too! So go, one of you and, laying hold of that scoundrel Shichinosuke by the hair of the head, drag him to this place."

* *I no kawazu daikai wo shirazu.*

One of Nobukata's disciples immediately set out for the temple, and demanded of the priest that Shichinosuke be sent to his master without delay.

The priest, on hearing what had occurred, was frightened out of his wits, and replied:—"I cannot decide this myself; I will go and see Shichinosuke about it. He has been unwell of late, so that what can be the meaning of this freak of his I cannot tell. He must be slightly demented I should say. Anyhow I will see him about it and let you know the result."

"What on earth have you been doing now?" exclaimed the priest to his nephew. "Do you know that you have provoked the fencing-master to send a man here to insist on your fighting with him with a real sword? What could have induced you to act in this way? Are you aware that you have put your life in danger?"

"Please, uncle, not to trouble yourself about this matter in any way," replied the lad quite calmly. "This fellow Arima Nobukata is a man who seems unaware of the existence of any one in the world but himself. It was because he placed an outrageous notice outside his gate that I wrote what I did. It was done by way of reproof, and not as mischief. And now for the fellow to say he wishes to see which of us is the better man with real swords!—well, this is a joke! . Anyhow I will go at once

and cross swords with him: so don't trouble yourself any more about it, uncle."

"An audacious young scamp, indeed!" replied the priest. "It is hopeless to expect to do anything with such a one as you: just stay here, and I will set the matter to right."

The priest went to Fukata's messenger and said:—"Really, sir, I am sorry that your master's august wrath has not been unshared. The mischief that has been perpetrated is abominable. This Shichinosuke, I must tell you, sir, is my nephew. I have no reason to be proud of him, as you may imagine. He is only a lad of twelve. I have noticed that of late he has been growing very arrogant, and I have observed too that he gives way to fits of passion every now and again. I have not allowed him to leave the temple for some days. But yesterday I sent him on a little errand to Himeji; and this is the result. I beg, sir, that you will be good enough to offer my humble apologies to your master, and ask him to pardon this boy's misbehaviour."

"I thought," replied the messenger, "that the person who was audacious enough to scribble on my master's notice-board was probably some noted fencer, but when you tell me that it was the work of a child who is ill and given to fits of passion, why, then there is no reason for

my master's taking any further notice of the matter. But as I have no power to settle anything without consulting him, I will return and tell him what you say and let you know the result."

Nobukata, after hearing the report of the messenger, remarked:—"I thought that it was something of this kind. But had I done nothing to discover who the culprit was, of course it would have been said that I was afraid to encounter the man who had insulted me. It being a boy that has defaced my notice-board, to fight with him would be unmanly and undignified. Yet something must be done to wipe off the seeming disgrace which the disfigurement of the notice-board involves. Who knows but ourselves that it is a child who has committed this offence?"

Here Nobukata put his head on one side as though in deep thought, and, after a moment, addressing the messenger who had come from Nomura, said:—"I am sorry to trouble you so much, but just go again to the priest and say that, in accordance with his request, I will not enforce Shichinosuke's fighting with me, but that, as the lad is evidently very ignorant of manners, he is to bring him to-morrow at twelve o'clock to the pine-plantation on the outskirts of the town, where I will meet and instruct him."

On the messenger's reporting this to the priest, the latter replied :—" I am extremely grateful for this kindness. And that your master should not only be good enough to overlook Shichinosuke's offence, but should condescend to instruct him as well—this is beyond all my expectations. Thank you very much for your trouble in coming a second time. He shall be at the appointed place to-morrow at noon."

Nobukata was interested in making this as public as possible. So he had notices placed in different parts of the town, which stated that on the following day at noon Arima Kiheiji would impart instruction to Shichinosuke of Nomura, and that listeners would be welcome.

The next day Nobukata, having arrayed himself in his best clothes, a little before twelve entered his palanquin and, attended by some fifty of his pupils made his way to the pine-plantation on the outskirts of the town, and on arrival pompously seated himself in a chair that had been prepared for him in the midst of the assembled multitudes.

Punctual to time, the priest of Kōshōji shortly after arrived, with his rosary in his hand, and Shichinosuke walking by his side.

The priest approached Nobukata and, bowing, said :—" As you see, sir, Shichinosuke is but a lad. He is very

ignorant; I hope you will be good enough to instruct him."

Nobukata did not rise from his seat, and condescended to do no more than show by a slight movement of his eyes that he was aware that the priest was addressing him. Treating the priest with cold indifference, he turned to the lad and said. "Shichinosuke, come here!"

Shichinosuke advanced in a careless, slouching manner and bowed to the fencer.

"I am no other than the noted Arima Kihei-ji," commenced the fencer in a pompous voice. "Your scribbling on my notice-board was an outrageous piece of mischief. Since you are only a child, I will magnanimously pardon you, but listen well to what I have to say. You have learnt a little fencing, I understand. Such a smattering knowledge as you possess, however, is in the possession of most lads of your age. You should not allow this to puff you up with conceit."

"Impudence, indeed!" thought Shichinosuke as he listened to these words. "This fellow would do well to apply to himself the advice he is so ready to give to others." But as his uncle was there, Shichinosuke did not venture to show any signs of resentment, but simply bowed assent to the fencer's remarks.

"So you assent to what I say, do you?—well, that's good. Now let's see what style of fencing you have

learnt. Come, lad, suppose I put you through your cuts and guards."

"If you specially wish it," replied Shichinosuke, "you shall see what I can do."

The words were hardly out of his mouth, when, as quick as lightning, he drew from his bosom a short fencing sword, measuring about one foot two inches, and before Kiheiji knew what was intended or had time to rise from his seat, he brought it down with tremendous force on his forehead.

"Ah!" ejaculated the fencer, and, reeling in his chair, he dropped dead on the spot.*

The greatest commotion imaginable followed. Kiheiji's pupils were mad with rage. One of them, rushing at Shichinosuke, attempted to seize him; but in an instant the latter caught the pupil by the hair of his head and sent him flying through the air. Two others now attacked him. One of these he kicked, and tumbled head over heels; the other he struck with his fencing sword so effectually that he did not care to approach Shichinosuke again. Whereupon a number of others drawing their swords, and exclaiming to each other: "Take care what you are at! he is no mean foe," set on him pell-mell.

* It should be borne in mind that Kiheiji was sitting when Shichinosuke killed him. Had he been standing the lad could not possibly have reached his forehead.

Shichinosuke, nothing daunted, dashed about hither and thither, dealing blows where they were necessary, and avoiding stroke after stroke in a way that astonished spectators and assailants alike till, watching his chance, he escaped scathless, dragging his old uncle, who was half dead with fright and bewilderment, after him.

The two had not gone far before they met a troop of *samurai*. Their leader was evidently a man of some importance. Shichinosuke ran up to the troop and said:—"Please, Sir Knights, to take pity on us: our foes are at our heels. What becomes of me I care not, but do take compassion on this old priest."

"We know nothing of the rights of the case," replied the leader of the troop, "but since you appeal to us because we are *samurai*, we cannot well refuse to help you."

Orders were given that the two refugees should be put into an empty palanquin that was being borne in their midst. Shichinosuke and his uncle had no sooner entered it than some thirty or forty of Arima's disciples came running up, and inquired of the *samurai*:—"Have you not seen a boy of some twelve or thirteen years of age with a priest pass this way?"

"No;" replied the leader of the troop, "we have seen no one of the kind. You had better search for them elsewhere."

"It is not so;" replied one of the pursuers. "We saw them come thus far. They cannot have escaped without your observing them. They are here."

"They are in the palanquin! They are in the palanquin! Let us search the palanquin!" exclaimed one of Kiheiji's followers.

"Look into a palanquin that I am guarding without my leave!—a piece of rudeness such as this I will never allow," replied the leader of the troops. "I am no other than Miyamoto Buzaemon, the retainer of Katō Kiyomasa, the Lord of Higo. I will not allow any one to point a finger even at a palanquin that I am guarding, much less look into it." Thus saying, Buzaemon seized his spear and stood ready to run any one through that approached, and then said: "Look into the palanquin, as many of you as please!—Come on!—don't be shy!"

As Buzaemon stood thus, he looked as fierce as the *Ni-ō* that stand at the entrance of the Buddhist temples;* or like the Chinese Chōhi when he stood on the bridge of Chōhan and withstood the Gi army.

* The *Ni-ō* [二王] are the two Deva Kings; two gigantic figures, one red, and with an open mouth, representing the *Yō*, or male principle, of Chinese philosophy; the other green, and with compressed lips, representing the *Yin*, or female principle. They are emblems of strength. Small printed *Ni-ō* are often pasted on door-posts to protect houses from burglars.

Kiheiji's disciples were overawed when they heard Kiyomasa's name and saw how formidable a foe they would have to contend with in his follower; and so, though they knew that such was not the case, they said:—"We have no doubt made a mistake; we will search for them elsewhere," and immediately went away.

Buzaemon smiled and ordered his men to proceed. When they had gone about five miles from the place where this incident occurred, he stopped the cavalcade and had the refugees brought before him. He had been struck by the magnanimous way in which Shichinosuke had pleaded for protection for the priest while professing himself careless as to his own fate. And now when he looked at Shichinosuke more narrowly and perceived that he was but a child, he was still more impressed by the courage and generosity which he had displayed.

The priest thanked his benefactor in a most polite manner. "You rescued us 'sir' at a time when we despaired of life," said the priest. "Your kindness is more than we can possibly repay." He then proceeded to relate the history of the whole affair described above. At the close of the story Buzaemon, turning to Shichinosuke, said:—"I admire immensely the pluck you have shown to-day. Whose son are you?"

On Shichinosuke's giving his father's name, Buzacmon looked very pleased and replied:—"Why, your father and I then served together under Ashikaga. At that time he and I were bosom friends, our relation to each other being very much like that of fish and water.* Since the Shōgun's fall I have lost sight of your father. I *am* glad to know that he is still alive. I will accompany you to his house."

"I am not allowed to go to my father's house, sir," replied Shichinosuke. "I am under punishment."

"Why?—what has happened?" asked Buzacmon.

The priest now came forward and gave the reason for Shichinosuke's banishment from his father's house. After which, Buzacmon, addressing the priest, said:—"I have a matter about which I wish to speak to you: we will go to your temple together."

On their arrival at Kōshōji, Buzacmon remarked:—"Shichinosuke has killed Kiheiji and several of his pupils.† Of course their companions and friends will come here to avenge their death. So what I advise is, that you dispose of your goods and chattels and leave this place at once. I will take the lad back to his father and make arrangements for secreting him somewhere."

* Intending to convey the meaning of close interdependence.

† This is the first mention of the fact that in the scuffle which followed Kiheiji's assassination several of his pupils were killed.

To this the priest agreed, and forthwith, assuming the garb of a mendicant friar, and not forgetting to take his lute, an instrument on which he played with great skill, so much so that subsequently he was known as the Lute-devotee,* he set out on his journey.

Buzaemon, under the guidance of Shichinosuke, made his way to Munisai's house. Munisai had heard that his son had been guilty of defacing Nobukata's sign-board, and had anticipated that the priest of Kōshōji was on this account greatly troubled, and was sorry enough that he undertook the charge of so wild a lad as Shichinosuke. Just as he was wondering how the affair had ended, Buzaemon reached his door. Seizaburō went to the door.

"Is this the house of Mr. Yoshioka Munisai?" asked Buzaemon.

"It is;" replied Seizaburō. "Who may the gentleman be that I have the honour of addressing? My father is at home to-day, sir: please walk in."

"I am an old friend of Munisai's," said Buzaemon as he passed into the house, "so I will enter without further ceremony."

Here the two knights met; and, after going through all that the etiquette of the gentlemen of those days

* *Biwa-dōjin*.

demanding in the way of salutation, which, it is hardly necessary to say, occupied a considerable time, as is the custom with old friends, they related to each other the experiences of the years that had intervened since their separation.

"I," said Buzae
to be patronized by
If there is anything
friend, I hope he
know."

been fortunate enough
getting on splendidly.
do to help an old
backward in letting me

"Thank you", replied Munisai. "Though I am in the unbecoming plight in which you now see me, yet, since I enjoy good health, I have really no cause to complain and am in no need of assistance, kind as it is of you to offer it nevertheless."

While the two were thus conversing, Seizaburō was preparing for the guest such refreshment as the house afforded. In offering it to Buzaemon, Munisai said:—"We have nothing whatever to give you worth eating. Notwithstanding its unpalatableness, let me beg of you to partake of a little *sakana*.* It is but vegetable *sakana*, I perceive."

* Literally anything taken with *sake*. As fish is usually taken with *sake*, the term is as a rule used as a general name for fish. In the present instance, however, it is to be understood in its original sense.

"If the dish," replied Buzaemon, "be an evidence of the friendly feeling that Munisai entertains towards Buzaemon, then vegetable *sakana* has a better flavour attached to it than any *sakana* lacking this association could possibly have. But there is a special kind of *sakana* that I wish to ask you for. Will you not give it to me?"

With a smile on his face, Munisai replied:—"Never mind about that now; just take what's set before you, that's a good fellow!"

"Ah," rejoined Buzaemon, "I perceive that you do not know to what *sakana* I am referring. It is to your son Shichinosuke that I allude."

Here Buzaemon informed Munisai of the manner in which he had come into contact with Shichinosuke. "And," said he, "I am overcome with admiration at the boy's courage and true nobleness of nature. I have never been blessed with a son of my own, so that, if you can consent to part with him, nothing would give me more pleasure than to adopt Shichinosuke and take him with me to Kumamoto. In my opinion it will never do to leave him here. Kiheiji's pupils will most certainly search the neighbourhood for him. If you can make up your mind to part with such a noble lad, it will have the effect of cementing the friendship of years in a lasting manner; and I shall feel indebted to you for life."

Munisai hardly knew how to reply to this request. A variety of emotions were contending for the mastery within his breast. He was an affectionate parent, and Shichinosuke was his favourite son and a lad of whose superior abilities and high moral qualities he was justly proud. And, now, to think that this son had been so near death, and that the hand which rescued him was that of an old friend. The boy was evidently immensely improved too: his anxiety to save his uncle's life and his carelessness about his own was a touching proof of this. And now must he part with this boy, perhaps for ever? Yet no other course was open. The lad's safety first and next his future prospects must take the precedence of all besides. Parental feeling must bow to the voice of reason. Buzaemon's request was no less reasonable than opportune—deny it, he could not. So after giving in the most honest manner possible a detailed account of the boy's failings, Munisai said:—"If, after hearing all, you still wish to adopt him, then I willingly intrust him to you, being confident that I could not place him in better hands."

A tear, whether of joy or of sorrow it would be hard to say, was seen to roll down the father's cheek as he thus gave his consent to his son's departure.

Shichinosuke was now called and his father addressed him as follows:—"Notwithstanding that you are such a

good-for-nothing lad, Mr. Buzaemon has been gracious enough to say that he will adopt you as his son. I have decided to allow you to accompany him to Kumamoto."

Munisai, being anxious to give some private instructions to his son before his departure, requested Buzaemon to excuse them, and, taking the lad into an adjoining room, addressed him as follows:—

"My object in sending you to the Kōshōji was to induce you to study. Knights are persons who from early years must give attention to learning. By learning it may seem to you as though I referred to something very extensive. But such is not the case. Described briefly, learning consists of two things, and two things only: one being loyalty, the other filial piety. Warriors are men who, when occasion calls for it, must be ready to throw away their lives as though they were dust. In the cause of justice they must look upon their persons as no more worthy of consideration than a feather. If they strive to be brave and to do what is right, they will bring no reproach on their parents.* But to be

* Here is the original of the first part of the passage, which is worth preserving:—*Bushi taru mono wa kotosaru ni yōshō yori gakumon sezarubekarazu. Gakumon to iu toki wa hiroki yō naredomo, tsumaru tokoro wa chū-kō no futatsu wo idezu. Mata bushi wa setsu ni nozomi, gi ni yotte inochi wo jinkai ni hi shi; mi wo kō-mo (tori no ke) yori karonji, giyū wo hagemubeshi—kore fubo no itai wo hazuka-shimezaru tokoro nari.* These utterances make it plain that in the conception of educated warriors at this time learning was another name for morality. Among the sayings of Tokugawa Ieyasu there are several parallel passages to this one.

putting forth strength on all occasions without an adequate cause, this is wrong. Prompted by the anger of the moment, to kill people, and thus be the means of one's own destruction—this is courting a death that only befits a dog, and making oneself a butt for the ridicule of the world. As Confucius remarks:--‘We are not to be like the tiger that in his fury throws himself into the river and loses his life without an adequate reason for doing so.’”


Shichinosuke was much moved by these words. Separation from his father had had the desired effect: it drew out his natural affection for his parents, and suppressed the unseemly arrogance the display of which had so often given Munisai pain.

“I will bear in mind what you say, sir,” replied Shichinosuke. “Hitherto, in my ignorance and folly, I have done nothing but behave in an impolite and arrogant manner, henceforth I shall act differently. The clouds that darkened my heart have been dispelled, and it is bright again.”

This mild and submissive answer from the lips of one who had never uttered anything like it in his father's hearing before, had the effect of intensifying the sorrow with which Munisai took leave of his son. But, having made up his mind to a course, Munisai was not the one to change; and he was averse to showing emotions that

would only have tended to unnerve Shichinosuke and unfit him for entering on his new duties with heart and soul. So he abruptly put an end to the interview by saying :—
“Mr. Buzaemon has a long journey to make. Already he has been greatly delayed on our account : he must not be detained any longer ; so make haste and get ready to start.”

Thus, as is so often the case, the pain of separation was alleviated by the bustle of the necessary preparations for the journey, and Shichinosuke set out for his new and distant home.





CHAPTER III.

Nothing special happened on the way to Kumamoto. But the journey was full of interest to a lad who had never been far away from home before. Shichinosuke observed everything with a keen eye as he went along the road ; and the knowledge of places and things acquired at this time served him to good purpose in later years.

On Buzaemon's arrival at the Kumamoto castle, he reported the results of his journey ; and, finding that Katō Kiyomasa was in the mood for chatting, he related to him the episode connected with Shichinosuke and asked for permission to adopt him.* Kiyomasa was taken with the story of the lad's brave deeds and immediately said : —“ Adopt him of course. You are lucky to have found such a boy to be your son.”

Buzaemon instructed Shichinosuke day after day in those arts and accomplishments with which at that time gentlemen's sons were expected to be acquainted ; in all of which the lad made astonishing progress, being sharp

* It was usual when a retainer wished to adopt a child for him to obtain his lord's permission to the step. For an account of adoption as practised in Japan, *vide* a paper by the present writer in Vol. XV., Pt. I., p. 58 *et. seq.* of *The Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*.

enough to infer from any one thing that he acquired some ten others.

Buzaemon's style of fencing differed considerably from that of Munisai. Munisai was the author of a style known as the *Jiken-ryū*, in which a very short sword (about 1 ft. 2 in.) was used. Buzaemon, on the other hand, practised a style known as the *Kurama-ryū*, in which a sword measuring about 2 ft. 3 in. was employed. Buzaemon was an adept in the *Kurama* style. Shichinosuke, whose aptitude for fencing was something astonishing, soon acquired the new style. At the same time, the lad did not at all like the idea of relinquishing his father's style. It seemed to be giving up that which connected him with Munisai more than anything else.

One day, after these thoughts had been filling his mind, he went to Mount Aso, where there was a famous temple erected in honour of the great god Aso. Here he prayed that war might become more and more prosperous in the country reaching down to distant generations.*

The day on which Shichinosuke visited Mount Aso was a festival day, and all sorts of theatrical performances

* Instead of asking for personal advancement, as so many Japanese who pray are in the habit of doing, he asked that that in which he took delight might prosper; knowing that were there plenty of war, abundance of opportunities for accomplishing feats of valour would be afforded him.

were going on in front of the temple. One of these consisted of the dancing of a woman. As she danced, she flourished about in an extraordinarily skilful manner two swords. As Shichinosuke watched these manœuvres, the thought instantly struck him that if two swords could be thus made to perform all kinds of wonderful exploits they might, if skilfully handled, be used for fighting, and that with great effect too.

"Here" said he to himself, "is the way out of my difficulty about the two styles, that of my father and that of Buzaemon. If I can discover a way of using effectually both a long and a short sword at the same time, then without relinquishing my father's style I shall be able to practise that of Buzaemon."

Shichinosuke went to the temple and uttered solemn vows and prayers, invoking the gods to assist him in the elaboration of his scheme. Then he returned to his house, and week after week and month after month assiduously practised the new style until he had brought it to perfection. When he felt confident of its success, he gave out to the world that he had invented a new style of fencing, which he had named the Two-sworded-style (*Witō-ryū*).

This invention has an interest of its own. Its origin was curious. It was the result of an attempt to solve a

problem, as most inventions are. But what is peculiar about it is that it originated in a moral feeling. It had its source in filial affection. Had Shichinosuke cared less for either his real or his adopted parent, he would have practised the *Jiken* to the exclusion of the *Kurama* style, or the *Kurama* to the exclusion of the *Jiken*. It was his ardent affection for both parents that led to his attempting to incorporate both their styles in his *Nitō-ryū*.

Buzaemon, having heard that Shichinosuke had been practising a new style of fencing, one day, called him and said:—"I hear that you have invented a new style of fencing. What is it like?"

"Well" replied Shichinosuke, "to speak of *inventing* a new style to one's parent, is perhaps saying more than is proper. But, as you are kind enough to inquire what the style is like, I will tell you. The way it is practised is as follows:—Two swords are taken, one in each hand, a long one in the right hand, which corresponds to the male principle (*yō*), and a short one in the left hand, which corresponds to the female principle (*in*). At first the two swords, like the two principles, remain together, and seem as though they were hesitating how to act: then, they part from each other, the male sword ascending, and thus corresponding to heaven, the female descending, and becoming earth. Then, coming together again in the form

of a cross, they produce all manner of results. This crossing of the two it is that, like the combining of the two principles, begets a universe of things. By a slight movement of the swords, the defensive posture known as the *Seigan* is assumed. There is no difficulty about changing the positions of the swords a thousand times to suit the ever varying movements of an opponent—their advance or retreat, their moving up or down is free and unimpeded by any hindrance whatever. But still, since I am young and inexperienced in such matters, I have little doubt that the style possesses a great many defects. I trust therefore that you will be kind enough to point out to me what you consider to be its weak points."

"Splendid! splendid!" exclaimed Buzaemon. "A magnificent theory! a great feat! a clever discovery, indeed! But as it not unfrequently happens that there is a discrepancy between theory and practice, we will put your theory into practice and see how it acts."

Accordingly, with apologies for assuming the position of an opponent to his father, Shichinosuke took two swords and placed them in position. Buzaemon with his usual long fencing sword, commenced the attack by a shout and a cut at Shichinosuke's head. The latter, in an instant, had his crossed swords up to receive the blow. Buzaemon pressed his opponent's swords hard to try and

break through the combination, but in vain. He then tried to withdraw his own sword; but there was no chance of doing it without the risk of being pierced, as Shichinosuke held his upper sword close to the blade of his opponent's weapon while supporting it from beneath with his under one. Had Buzaemon removed his sword, Shichinosuke would have run his under sword into his body before Buzaemon's sword could be lowered to parry the thrust. So Buzaemon, seeing that there was nothing to be done, threw away his weapon and retired. He tried another mode of attack, but with no better success. "This is a style," said Buzaemon, "of which you need never be ashamed anywhere."

As time went on, the Two-sworded-style became more and more popular in every part of the country. Fencers crowded to Shichinosuke's place to fence with him, but were invariably defeated.



CHAPTER IV.

Subsequent to the death of Arima Kiheiji, a fencing master of wide repute established a fencing school in the town of Himeji. His name was Sasaki Ganryū Yoshitaka. Ganryū was the son of Sasaki Shōtei, a man who, previous to his defeat by Oda Nobunaga, wielded enormous power in the province of Ōmi.* Ganryū, after his father's death, was taken by his mother to Mogami, Dewa, where he remained many years.

From early days Ganryū's mother used to tell him of his father's great prosperity previous to his fall, and to impress upon him the duty of endeavouring to retrieve the lost fortunes of his house.

When Ganryū was not more than eleven or twelve years of age, his mother died. Before her death, she solemnly charged her son not to neglect the duty that she had impressed upon him.

The lad when left to himself in this way, tried his very best to fit himself for the arduous task that devolved on him. He went out into the mountains and practised fencing by aiming blows at stocks and stumps of wood ;

* For further information on this point *vide* my *New Life of Toyotomi Hideyoshi*, p. 114.

he climbed trees, ascended mountains, went down into deep ravines, and swam across rivers: his aim in all this being to accustom himself to toil, hardship, and danger.

One day, when Ganryū was fishing on the banks of the river Mogami, he espied a child floating down the stream, half dead and half alive. Springing into the water, he rescued it. On inquiry he found out that the child was the son of a fencing-master in the employ of Mogami Yoshifusa, the Baron of Dewa, whose castle was situated in Yamagata. The fencing-master's name was Noda Daizen, a swordsman of some note. To this man Ganryū related his history, and, as a result, was adopted into his family and instructed in his style of fencing. Ganryū made rapid progress in the art, and Daizen soon perceived that he would grow up to be a man of whom his adopted parent would have reason to be proud.

Ganryū lived to fulfil these predictions. He became the successor of Daizen as instructor at the Baron's mansion, and was a far more skilful fencer than his predecessor.

After giving instruction for some years, Ganryū began to think that he ought to be doing something to prepare the way for the realization of his mother's wishes. So he obtained permission from his master to start off on a fencing pilgrimage.

Over his pilgrimage he spent several years and had some exciting adventures, which I cannot stay to relate. Subsequent to this he returned to Yamagata, where he resumed his duties as an instructor in fencing.

The early death of both his parents deprived Ganryū of the firm discipline which had been the making of Shichinosuke. Growing up with a sense of his importance as the son of an illustrious man and the destined retriever of the fortunes of his house, and proud of his success as a fencer, gradually he began to treat those whose strength or skill was not equal to his own with undisguised contempt. This made him extremely unpopular at the castle. Seeing how little he was respected, he determined to try his luck elsewhere. On considering where he should go, it seemed to him that he could do no better than proceed to Kyōto and endeavour to obtain an interview with Toyotomi Hideyoshi. "Hideyoshi always estimates men at their proper price," said he to himself. "I have no doubt that as soon as he sees me he will recognize my superior powers and give me a good position. Thus shall I rise to fortune and to fame and my mother's dying wishes will find their fulfilment."

So, making his way to the capital, he traversed the streets in search of a suitable place in which to establish a fencing school. In a street known as Matsubara-dōri

he saw a large house to let. This he hired and had done up in first-rate style. He placed outside the front door the following notice :—"The first Fencing School in the Country! Sasaki Ganryū Yoshitaka undertakes to fence with ten or twenty opponents in succession, and to guard himself against any number of arrows, darts, or missiles."

This notice attracted scores of fencers from all quarters of the town. Many of these would have been glad enough to have taken the conceit out of Ganryū, but he was too good a man for them all. One after another his opponents were defeated. So it happened that by degrees those who had witnessed or heard of the contests which had taken place grew to think that Ganryū was the first fencer in the country. Numbers of men who were on their pilgrimage for the purpose of perfecting their styles crossed swords with him, and were forced to acknowledge his immense superiority. All this tended to increase his fame.

Among the five officers who held the post of *te-bugyō*, and whose duty it was to superintend the affairs of Hideyoshi's house, there was a man called Masuda Nagamori. Nagamori had a retainer called Ukijima Kazen. One day, when transacting some business for his master, Kazen passed Ganryū's place, and was attracted by the

pompous notice. "Impudence indeed!" he exclaimed. "I will go in and kill this insolent ass and put an end to his boasting."

But on second thoughts, Kazen did not consider it right for him to neglect his master's business for this. So he went home and asked Nagamori to allow him to go and fight with Ganryū.

"You need not go to him," replied Nagamori. "If you wish to fight with him, I will have him called and will watch the fencing myself."

Ganryū was summoned to Nagamori's house, and he fenced with Kazen there. With nothing but an iron fan in his hand* Ganryū beat his opponent out and out; and subsequently all the other retainers of Nagamori who had any pretence to the name of fencers were worsted in like manner.

Nagamori was very pleased with Ganryū: after entertaining him handsomely, he sent him home, determining in his own mind that he would take the first opportunity of recommending him to Hideyoshi.

Not many days after, Nagamori related all that had

* Fencers who were conscious of great superiority to their opponents, did not deign to use a fencing sword, but defended themselves with anything that happened to be at hand. Fans with an iron framework were very frequently used for this purpose.

occurred to Hideyoshi and spoke in the highest terms of Ganryū's skill as a fencer. This met with no response whatever from Hideyoshi; who, when Nagamori had finished, simply said, "You can go home."

Ganryū, on his return to his house after fencing with Nagamori's followers, felt highly gratified with the day's accomplishments. He called his two chief retainers and told them all that had happened, and added :—"Nagamori will be sure to recommend me to Lord Hideyoshi, and the result will be that (to name the lowest figure possible) I shall receive an income of ten thousand *koku* a year, and in that case, I shall be able to confer emoluments on you both."

A few days after this a summons from the Mayor of Kyōto reached Ganryū. He was ordered to appear before the Mayor without delay. Susukida Hayato-no-shō, a man with a somewhat remarkable history, a great warrior and a noted fencer, was Mayor of Kyōto at this time.

"A red letter day in my history," exclaimed Ganryū when the summons reached him. "To-day shall I rise to power." Thus saying, he set out in great pomp for the office of the *Machi-bugyō*.

His retainers, after their master's departure, did nothing but converse about the various emoluments that would within a very few weeks be theirs; and, acting on the

proposal of one of the party, they determined to celebrate the occasion with a good drink.

On Ganryū's reaching the Mayor's office, he was addressed as follows:—"Sasaki Ganryū, you have taken up your quarters in Matsubara-dōri; and, without regard to the deference due to the place in which His Highness* is pleased to reside, you have put up a bombastic notice outside your house, which has caused great excitement in the city. This offence merits heavy punishment; but by special favour you are let off with banishment from the city. You are to leave the capital this very day."

Ganryū's disciples waited in anxious suspense for his return. When he entered the house, he looked crest-fallen. He was bound to tell them what had happened, which he at once did, with the result that with the exception of two they all absconded.

Ganryū completed his preparations as rapidly as possible and set out. After he had proceeded a few paces along the road, he turned round to take a last look at the fencing-school by means of which he had acquired so illustrious a name. For about his being a great man, Ganryū himself never entertained the shadow of a doubt. It was one of those dogmas of his creed which

* Referring to Hideyoshi.

were too sacred to be questioned—in fact, it was self-evident—any one with eyes must see its indisputableness in an instant. But he seemed to himself to be in a world where discernment of true merit was an extremely scarce commodity. Well, he would try his luck elsewhere: but before doing so he would go back and record the thoughts that were passing through his mind. And so, retracing his steps, he took out his pen, and wrote on a piece of paper the following lines:—

"Loud neighs the horse
"That can do his thousand miles a day.
"But, alas! he neighs in vain.
"For the man that knows his worth exists not.
"Ganryū's day has not come; so he departs.
"But when that day does come,
"Let there be no vain regrets!" *

After pasting the verse to the gate of the house he had occupied, he set out for Chūgoku.

Nagamori was utterly at a loss to account for the turn events had taken. With the object of finding out what had induced Hideyoshi to act in this manner; for he it was that had ordered the banishment, Nagamori sought and obtained a private interview with the *Taikō*.

* Ganryū thought that Hideyoshi would live to regret that he had banished such a great man as himself from the capital.

"What do you think of Ganryū?" asked Hideyoshi of Nagamori.

"That he is a first-rate man" replied Nagamori, "such as is not to be matched nowadays."

"If that is how you think of him," replied Hideyoshi, smiling, "it is to be pitied. Whether you are fit to act as one of my lords, or whether this Ganryū appears to be one of the significant of men. Fancy a man being foolish enough to put up a notice outside his gate stating that he is the best fencer in Japan! In a large country like this who can know how many expert swordsmen there are? The provinces swarm with good fencers. A greater fool than this man it would be difficult to find. 'He that knows himself and knows the enemy, may fight a hundred times and always come off victorious,' says a passage in the *Hyōhō*.* But as for this fellow, he neither knows himself nor any one else, and therefore he has no title to our esteem. His coming to settle down here under my very nose and sounding his praises in my ears, was a piece of impudence that I could not tolerate, so I banished him from the city. I knew the other day, when you were speaking so highly of him what kind of

† A term that includes a number of books treating of military matters; of which the *Sonshi*, *Goshi*, *Shibahō*, *Rieikō-mondō*, *Utsuryōshi*, *Sanyaku*, and *Rikufō* are the chief.

a man he was, but, as others were present on that occasion, I did not care to say anything to you about it: as we are alone to-day I have spoken my mind fully."

"I am astonished at your sagacity," replied Nagamori. "Please pardon me for my carelessness in recommending such a man."

"It was not carelessness at all," replied Hideyoshi. "You meant well, only you mistook your man. In future be more cautious as to whom you recommend."

Not long after this, it was reported to the Mayor of Kyōto, and by him to Hideyoshi, that Ganryū had pasted a verse on his gate which contained some impolite references to the *Taikō*.

When Nagamori was informed of this, he went in post-haste to Hideyoshi and, after acquainting him with what had occurred, exclaimed:—"Abominable villain! I have come to ask Your Highness to give me some troops that I may pursue him and bring him back a captive to the city."

Roaring with laughter at the new turn that his impulsive retainer's feelings had taken, Hideyoshi replied:—"Such a man as Ganryū, if you give him a rope long enough, will be sure to hang himself. Self-destruction being certain with a man of this kind, you need not be so anxious to make a captive of him."

Ganryū wended his way to Himeji, where he had a few acquaintances. Here he hired a house and opened a fencing school, outside of which was placed a notice similar to the one put up in Kyōto.

He soon grew popular in the town, and before very long his praises were sounded in the ears of the nephew of Hideyoshi, Kinoshita Katsutoshi, a baron who at that time was in receipt of an income of two hundred and forty thousand *koku* a year. When Katsutoshi heard of the circumstances under which Ganryū had left Kyōto and of his great skill as a fencer, he remarked :—" Doubtless my uncle was jealous of Ganryū, and that is why he was expelled from the city. I will make use of him."

So Katsutoshi sent for Ganryū and gave him the post of fencing-master at his mansion. While filling this post, Ganryū still continued to carry on his fencing school in the town; so that his time was fully occupied. Two years passed without anything special occurring, Ganryū's popularity still keeping up, and as a consequence his conceit becoming more and more a part of his inmost being.





CHAPTER V.

My story now returns to Munisai. Munisai's reputation as a fencer, through what channel we are not told, reached the ears of Mōri Terumoto. In this nobleman the old fencer found a patron, who supplied him with an income of eight hundred *koku* a year. This involved his moving to Hiroshima, where he gave lessons in fencing for some time. But he was over sixty years of age; he had taken part in many a battle and had often been wounded. His wounds now commenced to give him trouble, as is so often the case with old warriors. With a view to remedying this, he asked and obtained leave from his lord to visit the Arima hot-springs. Thinking that for an invalid to travel with a number of followers would be tedious, he only took one servant. The servant's name was—Kyūsuke.

After spending a fortnight at the Arima spa, Munisai felt quite another man. Consequently he determined to return to Hiroshima. But before doing this he thought it would be pleasant to see the noted places of the neighbourhood. So he made the round of the sights, and among other places visited the castle-town of Himeji.

While in Himeji he put up at an inn in Fukui-machi, kept by one—Jirobei. Here, owing to a slight indisposition from which he was suffering, Munisai remained a fortnight. During this time Kyūsuke, who was excessively fond of children, was in the habit of whiling away the hours by playing with the landlord's child. One day he took this child out into the garden attached to the inn, and when the child cried for a persimmon that was hanging from a tree which was the property of the next door neighbour, Kyūsuke stretched over and picked the persimmon. He was discovered and instantly arrested.

The next door neighbour was no other than Sasaki Ganryū. When the landlord of the inn heard what had occurred, he exclaimed:—"Here's a pretty business! I had rather it had been any one but this Ganryū that we had offended. He is a nasty cross-grained fellow who takes umbrage at the slightest thing."

"An unfortunate affair, indeed!" remarked Munisai, when the matter was reported to him. "Anyhow, do you go and beg the man's pardon for my servant's offence. But be sure and not say who I am. If you let him know that I am a *samurai*, he will make no end of fuss, and there is no saying how the thing may end."

Jirobei went to Ganryū's house to try to get Kyūsuke out of the scrape. Ganryū immediately asked Jirobei

whether the perpetrator of the offence was one of his own servants or that of a guest.

"A guest's," was the reply.

"Is the guest a peasant or a warrior?" asked the fencer.

"Jirobei wished to carry out Munisai's instructions; but he thought that if he told a lie and it were discovered, with such a man as Ganryū to deal with, there was no saying what would be the consequence and therefore he felt obliged to reply, "A warrior, sir."

"Whence is he?"

"He is a retainer of Lord Mōri; his name is Yoshioka Munisai."

No sooner did Ganryū hear this name than he thought to himself:—"This is no other than that famous fencer of the west whose equal, it is said, is not to be found in those parts. If I allow his servant to go off scott free, of course what has happened will ooze out, and people will say that Sasaki Ganryū was afraid to fence with such a noted man as Munisai and therefore it was that he released his servant."

So, turning to Jirobei, he said:—"Why did your guest not come himself and ask that his servant might be pardoned? To employ another person to do this for him shows a want of due respect to me. Go and tell

him that if he wishes his servant released he must come himself."

Jirobei returned and related this to Munisai.

"There, there! I thought so," exclaimed Munisai, "A pretty mess we have made! If you had only done as I ordered—concealed the fellow—-but, there, it is no use regretting now. I must see this fellow."

So, arraying himself in a dress suit, Munisai, went to Ganryū's house. "I, sir, am Yoshioka Munisai. I have come to say that you will be good enough to overlook the offence that my servant has committed."

"The offence is a trifling one" replied Ganryū, "and your magnifying it so much makes me feel quite uncomfortable. Of course I will pardon it. But now, to come to another matter, I have heard, sir, that you are the most noted fencer in the whole of Japan. Your praises have often been sounded in my ears, but I have never been privileged to meet you till to-day. Though but a poor hand at it, I, too, have been engaged in teaching fencing, and I have a notice outside my door which states that I am the first fencer in the country. Now, sir, of course there cannot be two firsts; so what I propose is that you and I have a turn together to see which of us is the better man."

Munisai thought to himself as he listened to these remarks :—" This fellow is a fool who is not worth fighting. I must put him off somehow or other." So he replied :—" I, sir, am, as you see, an old man. It would be little use for me to fence with one so active as you. Without a contest, you may take it for granted that I am not equal to you ; so we will settle that I am defeated and reckon you as the first fencer in the country. I beg to be excused from fencing with you."

Ganryū would not hear of a refusal. " Either you fence, or I keep your servant as my prisoner," he persisted.

Seeing that there was no choice, Munisai replied :—" Very good, then I will fence. Not being a private person, however, but the retainer of a great lord, I must obtain permission before I can fight. I will send a request to your baron, Lord Katsutoshi."*

" It is quite natural for you to wish to do this," replied Ganryū.

The two men both sent petitions into Katsutoshi, and permission to hold the match was at once granted, the

* When his own master lived at a great distance and a retainer wished to engage in a contest, it was usual for him to obtain permission to fence or fight from the baron in whose dominion he happened to be at the time ; and the permission thus obtained was looked on as though it had been granted by the retainer's own lord.

more readily as the baron was desirous of displaying to the world the superior skill of Ganryū.

The place decided on for the contest was Kamejima; the time, ten o'clock on the following day.

Before the hour appointed a large number of distinguished persons had assembled on the spot where the contest was to take place. Ganryū, with two of his retainers, arrived first on the ground; and, after paying his respects to the local officials present, sat down in a chair and awaited the arrival of Munisai. The old man soon made his appearance, accompanied by his faithful servant Kyūsuke.

As the spectators looked at the two men before the contest commenced, they were struck with the contrast between them. Ganryū, a man with a magnificent physique, about six feet one inch in height, his limbs well proportioned, his figure erect, was well dressed, and fenced with a sword about three feet long. As he stood in the middle of the fencing ring, he looked like a being endowed with supernatural strength a blow from whose hand would mean instant death.

Munisai, on the other hand, was a poor shrivelled-looking old man: in height, only a little over five feet; grey-headed, thin, and weak in appearance. As the spectators gazed on him, they said:—"It is pitiable to see

such a poor old man confronting a giant like Ganryū; one good blow will do for him." Here they held their breath and anxiously awaited the commencement of the contest.

Ganryū, in his usual pompous fashion, came forward and said to Munisai:—"If I am defeated to-day, then the sign-board that declares me to be the first fencer in the country becomes yours." The words were no sooner out of his mouth than, with a shout, he rushed at Munisai and dealt a heavy blow at his head.

Munisai parried the stroke. The fight now began in right earnest. The fencing swords moved so rapidly that it was almost impossible to see them. It was not long before Ganryū received a sharp stroke on the shoulder, which had it been from a real sword would have cost him his life.

Munisai, in accordance with the etiquette of the fencing ring, immediately retreated a few steps; and, bowing his head, was about to leave the ring. But Ganryū, in defiance of the rules observed by all fencers, attacked Munisai whilst the latter was in the act of observing the etiquette proper to the occasion. So Munisai had to defend himself; and in the contest which ensued he again struck his foe. This time he delivered a sharp blow on Ganryū's hand—the hand in which he held his sword, causing the sword to fall out of Ganryū's hand.

Ganryū now grew furious and, regardless of all propriety, rushed at Munisai, seized him by the collar of his coat and attempted to throw him down. But Munisai was too quick for him, in an instant he eluded his grasp, and, furthermore, sent him flying through the air to a distance of about four yards. This feat was greeted by an exultant shout from the spectators that rang through the surrounding hills, startling the deer that grazed on the mountain slopes.

Ganryū did not venture to approach such a formidable antagonist again. Though overcome with chagrin, in feigned humility, he addressed Munisai as follows:—"Like the frog in the well, I have lived in ignorance of the existence of such a deeply experienced fencer and such a brave man as you. I have represented myself to be the first fencer in Japan. My remorse knows no limit. I beg that you will take possession of my notice-board."

"Please not to talk in this way," replied Munisai. "Defeat and victory depend on luck. My having been victorious to-day is no reason why I should always be so; there is no need therefore for you to remove your notice-board."

"Let me entreat you to take it," continued Ganryū. "I said that it should be handed over to you, and I am bound to keep my word."

"No," persisted Munisai, "nothing will induce me to consent to this. I have no such feeling as would lead me to do a thing of this kind. So please say no more about it."

Here Kyūsuke came forward and said:—"Pray do not dispute about the notice-board. As I knew there was no doubt about my master's coming off victorious, before I came here this morning, I removed Ganryū's notice-board and deposited it at our inn."

Munisai was naturally excessively annoyed by the indiscretion of Kyūsuke and he at once reproved him sharply for his insolence.

"You see how I am situated," observed Ganryū to the assembled multitudes. Then turning to his pupils, he said:—"I can no longer act as your teacher. I would not, however, have you look upon this as a misfortune that has befallen me. It is not so. On the contrary, it is a piece of good luck. For I have been taught by my defeat how much I have to learn. Henceforth I intend traversing the country to study the art of fencing more perfectly; when I become sufficiently proficient, I shall return to this place and commence to teach again."

Ganryū then returned to his house, sold off his things as rapidly as possible; and, with Aoyama Mompei and Oshida Sakichi, the two disciples who had followed him from Kyōto, he left the place.

Munisai, too, after paying his respects to the local officials, set out for Hiroshima.

Though Ganryū feigned to have been humbled by his defeat, such was not the case. He said to himself:—
“Were it not for the existence of this Munisai, I should be the first fencer in the land. So I will kill him out of the way.”

Ganryū seems to have been entirely ignorant of the existence of such men as Tsukahara Bokuden, Tsukahara Kosaiji, Itō Ittōsai, Kembō Matasaburō, Ono Jirozaemon, Tamiya Tanomo, and Takenouchi Kaganosuke. All these were contemporary noted fencers, and undoubtedly superior to him.

As Munisai had set out on his journey, and Ganryū was ignorant of the route he had taken, the latter thought that it would be impossible to kill his foe then; so he followed him up to Hiroshima. Even here he found that it would be no easy matter to accomplish his purpose; for Munisai, being a man of some importance, always went out attended.

For some time Ganryū failed to hit on a plan that seemed likely to prove successful. But one day, when walking on the outskirts of Hiroshima in a place called Imado, near a bank he saw assembled a large number of beggars: Imado being a favourite resort of vagrants of all kinds.

"I will employ these beggars to effect my purpose," said Ganryū to himself. So for the space of seven days he feasted them with rice and *sake*. This did not appear in any way strange to the recipients of his bounty, as they thought that Ganryū was observing the custom of aiding the spirits of the deceased by bestowing alms on the poor.* While the beggars were feasting day by day, Ganryū tested their courage and strength of purpose in various ways. After a while he chose out four that seemed to him promising men and told them that he was desirous of saying something to them.

They, thinking it probable that he wished to try a new sword on them,† were afraid to approach him.

Ganryū assured them that there was no cause for alarm. So they accompanied him to a retired spot, where he asked:—"Do you know a man called Yoshioka Munisai?"

"Know him! Of course; everybody knows him," replied the beggars. "He is a very noted fencer."

"Well," said Ganryū, "I must tell you that this Munisai is a mortal enemy of mine. He slew my father: and filial piety makes it incumbent on me to avenge my father's death. I might break into his house and endeavor

* This custom originated with Buddhism.

† A very common practice in those days.

our to slay him there. But, surrounded as he is by attendants, this plan would not prove successful. I wish therefore to kill him as he passes along the road on his way to or from some place. And what I want you to do is to give me information as to his movements." Here Ganryū gave them a *ryō* each.

"Nothing is easier than this," replied the beggars. "We will give you all the information we can obtain."

Munisai, while on his way from Himeji to Hiroshima, had kept a sharp look out; being well aware that it was customary for defeated fencers of bad dispositions to plot the destruction of their victors. But once having reached Hiroshima, he deemed caution unnecessary. That the enmity of Ganryū was deep enough to bring him all the way to Hiroshima to seek out his foe, he had no idea. Munisai was a man whom natural goodness had made blind to the inherent wickedness of others. Never having been the subject of the strong passion that impelled Ganryū to such dread acts as the ones I am about to describe and that eventually was to consummate his ruin, he did not suspect its presence, much less measure its power, in other hearts. So, on his return to his house he gave his friends an account of his contest with Ganryū as the one exciting event of his trip, and then dismissed the subject from his thoughts. By some means or other, however, the

successful contest with Ganryū reached the ears of the lord of the manor, and Munisai's income was increased by one hundred *koku* a year on its account.

The beggars watched Munisai closely day after day. Advanced in years, he did not go out often unless in connection with his duties as a fencing master, when his route lay through places that afforded no facilities for the meditated assassination. What Ganryū wanted was to hear of Munisai's going to some place a little removed from the populous part of Hiroshima and, if possible, that he was to return to his house after dark: for, by attempting the assassination in the day, he would certainly risk being apprehended.

The opportunity looked for came. At the house of one of Munisai's pupils an operatic performance was to take place, and Munisai was invited to be present on the occasion. He accepted the invitation. Early one forenoon he left his house to attend the performance. His route lay through Imado, so he was seen by numbers of the beggars who were loitering about there. They at once hastened to inform Ganryū of what had occurred. "Munisai has passed through Imado, and has gone to a place about five miles distant," said the beggars. "He will certainly return by the same road as he went."

Ganryū was extremely pleased to hear this, and early in the afternoon, concealing himself in the grass that grew by the side of the bank, he awaited the arrival of Munisai. He told the beggars to go on the road in the direction in which the old man was expected to return, to keep a sharp look out, and to let him know when his enemy was in sight.

Munisai was handsomely entertained by his pupil. After having imbibed more *sake* than was good for him, he proposed to take leave of his host and return to his home. It was a dark, rainy, dreary night; so the host begged him not to think of venturing to set out so late in the evening. "Stop the night here," said he. "It is hardly safe to be out on such a night as this, and you an old man too!"

"No, no;" replied Munisai. "Old as I am, I am good for six or eight assailants any day in the week. I will go home. Many thanks for offering to put me up all the same."

Munisai set out with only two followers. A blazing torch was borne in front of him, for at this time no lanterns such as are seen nowadays were in use. The torch-light on such a pitch-dark night rendered Munisai conspicuous in the distance. So Ganryū was apprised of the approach of the man whose life he sought to take in

time for him to complete all his preparations before Munisai drew near. Hastily did he give the beggars who brought the information twelve *ryō* and enjoined on them the strictest secrecy: "We shall all be killed," said he, "if this matter be divulged."

When Munisai approached the place where his foe lay in ambush, he seemed to have a mysterious presentiment of some impending danger.* He stopped and asked his attendant whether the little bridge which he was crossing was quite safe.

"Quite safe," replied the attendant; and Munisai proceeded, but only to be greeted by the voice of Ganryū who, relying on the loaded gun which he held in his hand, ventured to acquaint his foe with his presence thus:—"Villain, Munisai! remember the enmity that you caused in Himeji."

Instantly Munisai's hand was on the hilt of his sword; but before the weapon had left its sheath the deadly firearm had been discharged by the cowardly hand of Ganryū. Alas! the assassin's aim was only too true. Munisai dropped dead to the ground.


One of the attendants attacked Ganryū, but was im-

* In Japanese stories such remarks as this are very frequent, writers and readers alike apparently believing in omens of good and evil. But some of Japan's great heroes made a point of showing their disbelief in omens of all kinds. *See* Appendix II.

mediately killed; the other threw away his torch and fled.

Ganryū, after running his sword through the throat of his foe, whistled for the four beggars who had assisted him to carry out his deadly purpose. They approached him with smiling faces, expecting to receive the reward promised them. Horrible to relate!—the poor wretches were all brutally murdered one after the other by the villain whose dupes they had been.

Having thus, as he thought, rendered the crimes of that night absolutely undiscoverable, Ganryū fled.





CHAPTER VI.

The attendant of Munisai who escaped hastened home and reported what had occurred. Seizaburō was ill at the time and not fit to leave the house, but, leaning on a stick, he made his way to the scene of the murder. On seeing his father's corpse lying in a pool of blood, he was overcome with grief and despair. He called on Heaven to witness the cruel spectacle, and vowed vengeance on the author of the crime. But to avenge his father's death Seizaburō had neither the strength nor the skill. There was his brother, however, who was as robust as he was brave, a skilful fencer and fond of fighting, to him he would commit the task of slaying the fiend who had perpetrated this deed of blood.

Accordingly Seizaburō immediately despatched a letter to Shichinosuke, informing him of what had occurred and requesting him to lose no time in taking vengeance on their cruel foe.

Shichinosuke presented the letter to Buzaemon and asked to be permitted to set out on this errand. "I know," said Shichinosuke, "that, having been adopted by you, it is not incumbent on me to avenge my father's death; but the circumstances are peculiar. My elder brother is not equal to the task, so unless I undertake it this

inhuman wretch is likely to defile the earth with his presence for many a long year to come. Please therefore to allow me to perform this duty to my deceased parent."

"Your request is a very reasonable one," replied Buzaemon, "but I have no power to settle the matter myself: I must report it to Lord Katō."

Buzaemon lost no time in requesting Katō Kiyomasa to permit Shichinosuke to kill his father's murderer; and as a result Buzaemon and his son were summoned into Kiyomasa's presence.

Kiyomasa looked displeased. He addressed Shichinosuke as follows:—"Your sorrow for the untimely death of your father Munisai is very natural; and your desire to avenge his death elicits my admiration. But having become the son of one of my retainers, you are no longer your own master, you are my retainer. For one of my retainers to attempt to slay the foe of another man's retainer, is something that cannot be allowed. Which do you most esteem your real or your adopted parent? A man who proposes to execute the *vendetta* must look upon his life as forfeited to this one purpose. For there is no saying but that he may lose his own life in attempting to kill another man. To whom does your life belong if not to me? Suppose, then, you lose your life in attempt-

ing this feat, how are you going to make up to me for the loss? I cannot give my permission to your going."

Buzaemon and Shichinosuke bowed their heads and, without answering a word, left Lord Katō's presence. They returned to their house and held a consultation as to whether the affair could possibly be managed without offending the baron. While they were engaged in considering a variety of plans, a messenger arrived from Kiyomasa, who said:—"Lord Katō commands me to inform you that he has heard that Shichinosuke has invented a mode of fencing which combines the strong points of both his real and his adopted parent's styles. Lord Katō is desirous of seeing how the Two-sworded-style answers; so you are to go to him at once."

Remembering that the baron did not seem in the best of moods when they left his presence, Shichinosuke and Buzaemon were quite anxious to know why they were called again. "Well, let us go and see," said Buzaemon. "Kiyomasa is a tender-hearted man, and I think he will do something to help you out of your difficulty, though exactly what I cannot say. Anyhow we shall know in a few minutes."

When Buzaemon and Shichinosuke reached the castle, they were at once conducted to the fencing-yard. Here they found assembled the twenty-eight brave men who

had been Kiyomasa's great support in the numerous wars that he had waged, with the baron himself in their midst, and a large number of persons of less note.

On the arrival of Shichinosuke there was a whispering among the heroes as to who should confront the author of the Two-sworded-style. This resulted in Kimura Matazō's coming forward and requesting to be permitted to act as Shichinosuke's opponent. "Very good," replied Kiyomasa, "you will do."

Matazō was the disciple of Tsukahara Kosaiji (Bokuden's nephew). He was a skilful fencer and a man of immense strength. It was said that his strength was equal to that of some twenty ordinary men. He sprang into the ring: and as he wielded a fencing-sword some three feet long, looked as though he could cleave an iron bar in two. He struck at Shichinosuke's head with all his might. Shichinosuke received the stroke on his crossed swords. Matazō tried to break the combination, but in vain.

Kiyomasa watched this feat with intense interest, and when he perceived that Matazō could neither break through the combination nor withdraw his sword, he exclaimed:—"Fine! fine! Now let me see how the position can be changed."

Whereupon Shichinosuke separated the swords, and stood ready to defend himself against any blow that might

be dealt at him. Matazō tried to find an unguarded place at which to aim a blow, but in vain. So he gave it up, and Kiyomasa, seeing this, ordered that the contest should close. The spectators, to most of whom the style was quite new, were loud in its praises; and the whole of that day and on a good many following ones Shichinosuke and his new style formed the chief topic of conversation among the heroes of Kumamoto, who never felt thoroughly interested except when conversing on military affairs,—warriors to the backbone that they were.

Kiyomasa now called Shichinosuke and said to him : —“ Your style is certainly a very striking one ; but in a large country like Japan there are a great many noted fencers ; and therefore it would be premature to say that your mode of fencing is superior to all others : it needs to be tested. With a view to your putting it to the test, it is my pleasure that you set out on a pilgrimage. Those whom you may meet with on your travels that are inferior to you, teach ; those that are superior, make your teachers. If circumstances require it, there is no objection to your testing the superiority of your style with a real sword. Here is a sword that I value very much : I now make you a present of it. It is one of Shizu Samuro Kaneuji's

* This was a tacit permission to his executing the *vendetta* on his father's murderer.

weapons.* Hereupon I change your name to Musashi. The meaning of this term (武藏) is 'the storing up of military knowledge'; and it is given to you because henceforth you are to be employed in acquiring a more minute knowledge of fencing."

The appellation Musashi was also given to Shichinosuke, or Munisai (I shall now call him) at this time.

Musashi returned to his father and made his preparations for starting.

On leaving Kumamoto he directed his steps to Hiroshima. On arrival there he consulted with Seizaburō as to who was the author of the murder and as to the best way of discovering the assassin's lurking-place.

It must be remembered that all that Seizaburō had to guide him in discovering the murderer was what the surviving attendant heard on the night of the murder about the enmity caused in Himeji. But the two brothers knew that their father, being an extremely inoffensive man, was not at all likely to have excited anyone's enmity intentionally, and that therefore the ill-will referred to was no doubt caused by the display of Munisai's skill in fencing during his stay in Himeji. "Ganryū is the murderer," said Musashi; "and I will go in search of him."

* Shizu Kaneuji was a very noted swordsmith.

He first went through Chūgoku,* but could hear nothing of the whereabouts of his foe; then, turning his face northwards, he passed through that part of the country known as the Hokurikudō,† and entered the province of Dewa.‡ Here he fought with a robber-chief, whom he killed. From thence he went on to Mutsu,§ and subsequently to Hitachi, where he fenced with that noted fencer Moro-oka Ichi-u.

Ichi-u was the author of a style of fencing known as the Moro-oka style. He was residing at this time in a place called Edogasaki. He was a man of a noble disposition, and he and Musashi at once became great friends. Ichi-u had some three hundred disciples. With a number of these Musashi fenced in Ichi-u's presence. Seeing that his pupils stood no chance before the author of the Two-sworded-style, eventually Ichi-u came forward himself. After trying his best for a little while, putting aside his sword, he said to Musashi:—"Your knowledge of the art of fencing is superior to anything I have seen for a long time. I am no match for you. I know of

* Embracing the San-indō and the San-yōdō; each of these terms includes eight provinces.

† The Hokurikudō contains seven provinces.

‡ Including Uzen and Ugo.

§ The ancient Mutsu included Rikuzen, Rikuchū, and the modern Mutsu.

only two men who can teach you anything. One is Tsukahara Bokuden and the other Itō Ittōsai. The former is still alive, but where he lives I cannot tell you. The latter I have entirely lost sight of, whether he is dead or alive I do not know. You in the course of your travels to endeavor to find Bokuden's whereabouts and to fence with

Musashi was told this, and, after putting up for the night, he set out for Edo, where he spent some time. Edo was at that time the residence of Tokugawa Iēyasu, and a stronghold of the central feudal government established by Hideyoshi.

On leaving Edo, Musashi travelled over the Tōkaidō to Himeji, and held a consultation with the keeper of the inn in which Munisai had stayed. Hearing that Ganryū had a number of pupils and admirers in this town, and that he had been heard to say that he would return and give them instruction again when he had become thoroughly proficient in fencing, Musashi decided to take up his quarters in Himeji. He was somewhat wearied after all his travels and hardships. Hope deferred had made the heart sick, and he was beginning to feel doubtful whether he would ever find his enemy by wandering about the country without any clue as to his whereabouts. So, with a view to conceal himself as much as

possible and yet be where he could hear everything that was going on, he asked the landlord of the inn to endeavour to get a place for him as a domestic servant of some kind in Kinoshita Katsutoshi's palace. He was the more anxious to obtain work in this house, as he thought it probable that Ganryū having been employed by Kinoshita, would on his return be sure to report his arrival to this baron, and perhaps seek to enter his service again. If this were the case, Musashi would be able to slay him whenever a suitable opportunity occurred.

The landlord succeeded in obtaining a situation for Musashi as a domestic servant in Kinoshita's palace. In this capacity Musashi performed the most menial tasks with his usual assiduity: so much so that his diligence attracted the attention of his employers, and it soon got to the ears of the Earl of Harima (Katsutoshi) that there was among his domestics a man who looked very different from ordinary servants. Kinoshita made inquiries about him, and when he found out who Musashi was sent for him and addressed him as follows:—"I had no idea that I had in my employ such a noted man as the author of the Two-sworded-style. If you will consent to become my retainer, I shall be happy to give you two thousand *koku* a year."

"I am extremely obliged to you for your kind offer, my Lord," replied Musashi; "but as I am the retainer

of Lord Katō, of Higo, I am not able to accept it. I am on a pilgrimage with the view of improving my style of fencing, and in the course of my wanderings have come here."

"Well, then," replied Kinoshita, "if you cannot become my retainer, still remain as my servant. I will order that two hundred bags of rice a year be set aside for your use."

Musashi thanked the baron and accepted the offer. While in Kinoshita's service, owing to an incident occurring the particulars of which it would take too long to relate, Musashi was accused of having stolen a sword. The fact was that he had had a sword put into his hands in a mysterious way. Doubtless he was duped by some sharper, who, on inquiry being made for a missing sword, took advantage of Musashi's simplicity to induce him to take the weapon as a present.

But this is not how the matter is explained in the *Kokon-jitsuroku Eiyū-bidan*.* True to the spirit of the age in which Musashi lived, and following the records of his life which appeared shortly after his death, the author of this work relates that Musashi had various dealings with foxes that had assumed the forms of men. The foxy nature of these creatures was discovered by the rapidity with which they acquired the art of fencing.

* *Vide supra*, p. 174, foot-note.

Musashi's being found with the missing sword in his possession was supposed to have been the result of the machinations of one of these transformed foxes. Musashi himself believed this, and his biographer states it as an historical fact. In those days Renard was supposed to be the author of anything and everything that it was difficult to trace to its real source.

Though Musashi was confident that a fox had been playing tricks with him, he did not care for the world to know that he had been thus deceived; specially as he had shortly before, to show his contempt for the vulgar superstitions about ghosts and apparitions, night after night slept in a part of the castle that was said to be haunted by transformed foxes. So, when accused of thieving the sword that was found in his possession, he did not deny the charge, but allowed himself to be placed under custody.

Kinoshita, thinking there was something mysterious about the matter, did not allow Musashi to be punished, contenting himself with placing him under the surveillance of one of his retainers.

The most exciting part of Musashi's life was yet to come. His wonderful adventures during the long and weary search for his foe and his final triumph will be described in Part II of this Biography.







APPENDIX TO TALE III

I

Tsukahara Bokuden, who is frequently mentioned in the Life of Miyamoto Musashi, was a noted fencer and teacher of spear-exercise who lived in the time of the Shōgun Ashikaga Yoshiaki [made Shōgun A.D. 1565]. He was the author of a style of fencing called the *Mute-kachi-ryū* (The Handless-victory-style).

It happened once that Bokuden, on his way eastward from Kyōto, was crossing the lake at Yabase, Ōmi, in a ferry-boat, in company with some seven or eight men. Among his fellow-passengers there was a man about thirty-seven years of age, who was tall in stature, had a black beard and who used extremely rough language. He was talking in the most vulgar, pompous fashion of his various powers, and boasting especially of his skill as a fencer. Any one listening to his bombastic language would have imagined that there was no one in the world to be compared to him.

Bokuden tried not to pay any attention to what this fencer was saying. He lay down and endeavoured to go to sleep, but though he dozed a little, he still heard the man going on in the same strain, till he felt it was beyond

all bearing. "You have been talking on all kinds of topics," said Bokuden to the man, "and you have said a great many extraordinary things. But what I find it difficult to pass over without comment are the remarks you have made on the subject of fencing. I have paid attention to fencing from my earliest days, but I have never done, as you have been doing, boasted of conquering this man and the other. All I have aimed at doing is to avoid being beaten by others."

"Your mode of fencing seems to be a very mild one," replied the man. "May I ask what style you practise?"

"I have no special style," replied Bokuden. "The mode I adopt is, without using my hands, to avoid being defeated, and therefore I win."

"Then," rejoined the man, "if you conquer without using your hands, why do you wear two swords?"

"The reason of my possessing these swords," replied Bokuden, "is one of those things which cannot be explained by word of mouth, and can only be thoroughly comprehended by a mind that is in sympathy with mine. What can be told of it, however, I will tell you. The object of my wearing these two swords is to enable me to cut off the vanity which is apt to spring up in the heart to the injury of the man, and to cut away all the buds of those evil thoughts which I find sprouting within my breast."

"Come! we will have a bout together;" exclaimed the man; "and we shall soon see whether you can conquer without using your hands or not."

"The swords of which I have been speaking," replied Bokuden, "are designed to preserve life. But in the case of a bad man they destroy it."

The man was still more enraged by this remark, as it seemed to contain an imputation. He told the sailors to land him at the nearest spot. "We will see," said he, "which of us is the better man."

Here Bokuden remarked:—"If we land at the ordinary place, there will be such crowds of people in our way that we shall not be able to fence. There is, as you know, away yonder a detached island, called Karasaki. Let us make for it. There will I show you 'The Handless-never-lose-style of fencing.'"

Whereupon Bokuden turning to his fellow-passengers, said:—"I have no doubt you are all in a hurry to get on your way, but stretch a point and have a look at our fencing."

The sailors pulled hard, and the boat soon reached the appointed spot. No sooner did it run aground than the man who had been talking so grandly sprang out of it and drawing a sword about three feet eight inches long, shouted to Bokuden:—"Now, come on! and I will cut you in two pieces."

"Wait a little;" said Bokuden coolly. "My 'Handless-victory-style' is not one that admits of so much hurry. I must go about it quietly." Here Bokuden tucked up his garments, and made it appear as though he were preparing for a great contest. Then he took off his sword and, addressing the sailors, said:—"No sword is needed for 'The Handless-victory-style' of fencing, so I will leave this with you. Instead of the sword please lend me a pole."

They gave him one of the poles used for pushing off a boat when she is grounded. He took the pole and made as though he were about by its means to spring on shore, but, instead of this, he thrust the pole into the sand, and with it rapidly pushed the boat off into deep water.

"Why don't you land?" shouted the other fencer in his fury to Bokuden.

"There is no reason why I should;" replied Bokuden. "Though I am sorry to put you to so much trouble, you had better swim out here to me, and then I will kill you, and so assist you to go to the place prepared for such as you. This is 'The Handless-victory-style' of fencing of which I spoke just now," shouted Bokuden, roaring with laughter.

"You abominable scoundrel! you mean, scurrilous villain! come back, come back!" cried the man.

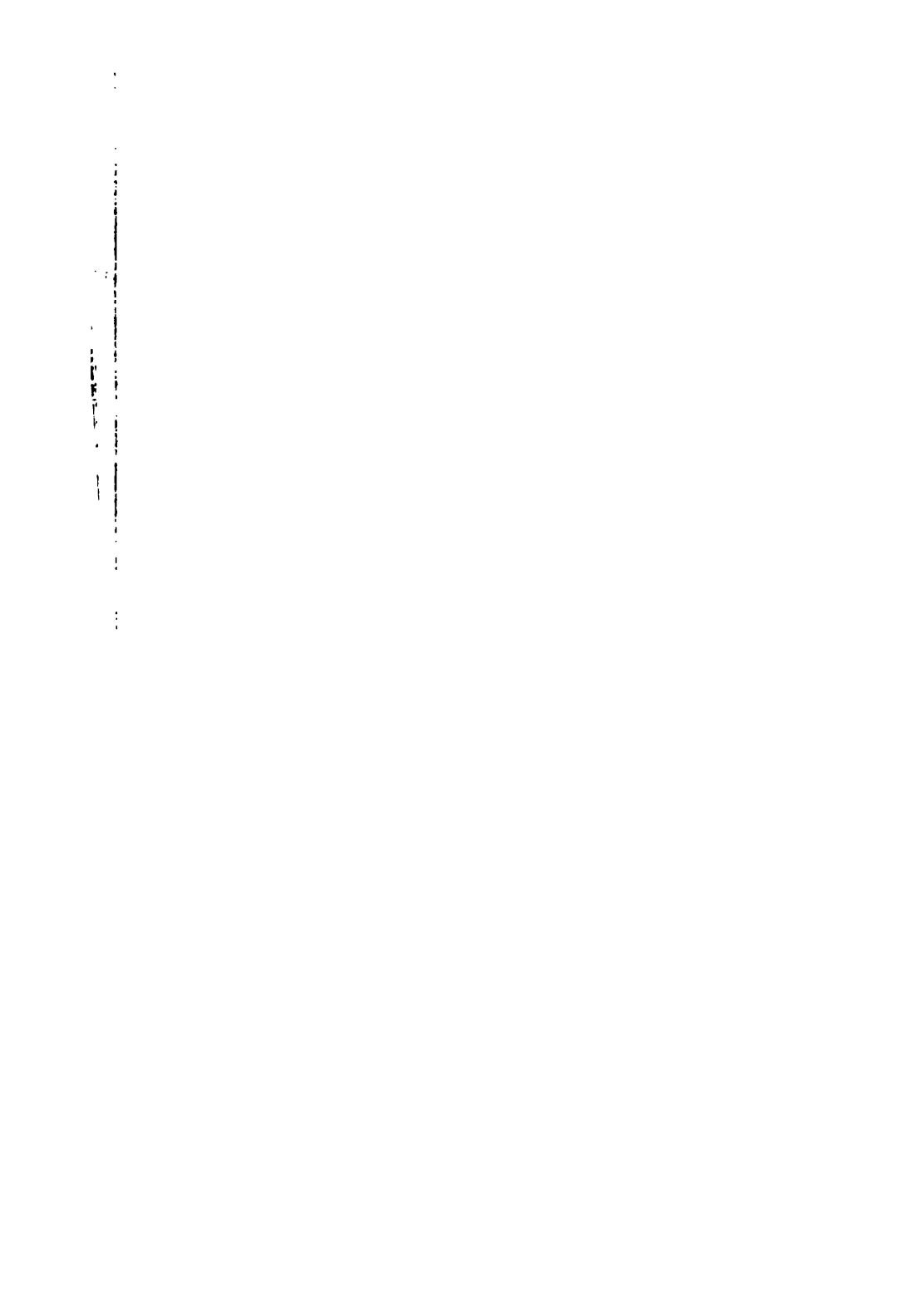
Bokuden, without taking the slightest notice of him, set the sailors to row the boat away. And when they had rowed out a long distance, standing up in the boat, he opened his fan, and waving it to and fro as a signal, said with a loud voice:—"I have given you a lesson in an abstruse part of the art which I practise. I have no doubt you are filled with admiration of it. Should you wish it, on some future occasion I will instruct you further. For the present, Adieu! Adieu!"

There are those who assert that Sakmua Ichimu was the subject of this tale. But probabilities are in favour of Bokuden's being the person concerned.

II

On one occasion when Takeda Shingen was going out to battle, a pigeon alighted on a tree near the place where the troops were assembled. The men were delighted at this good omen and showed it by their faces. Shingen, asking the reason of this, was told that according to the experience of old soldiers, the appearance of a pigeon shortly before an expedition started was always an indication of a great victory to be won later on. Without even waiting to hear the end of this explanation, Shingen took a gun and shot the pigeon, intending by this to show his contempt for such notions and to prevent his troops from being discouraged on future occasions when no pigeon made its appearance.*

* Compare what is related of Hideyoshi in my "New Life" pp. 117, 118





JAPAN IN DAYS OF YORE.

IV.

THE LIFE OF MIYAMOTO MUSASHI.

PART II.

CHAPTER I.

IT was about six years subsequent to the death of Munisai when Sasaki Ganryū, after having wandered from province to province, said to himself one day :—"Come! I have travelled far enough. The reproach brought on my name by my defeat in Himeji has now been wiped off. And Munisai being dead, I need not fear defeat again: I will return to Himeji and seek employment under the Earl of Harima."

This resolve he at once put into execution. On his arrival at Himeji, his old pupils began to gather around him. To some of them he said that his defeat by Munisai had proved of great benefit to him. "I regret to have to say, however," he added, "that not long after the fencing match the man who assisted me to attain the knowledge I now possess was killed by some unknown hand."

Ganryū's arrival and his superior swordsmanship were reported to Kinoshita. The baron sent for him and expressed a wish to see him perform some special feat of skill.

"As most of the men present are my pupils," replied Ganryū, "there is no one that will make a good match for

me in fencing, so I will try something else." Looking around, he caught sight of a checker-board covered with the white and black small pebbles used for draughts. "Take," said he to some of those , "these draughts and throw them at me. I myself against them, and will at the same time ite from the black ones."

This they did; separated them without a mistake. The trick ie to the spectators, and they applauded the one accord. Katsutoshi himself was immensely . Handing some wine to Ganryū, he said:—"I am afraid I cannot find a swordsman to match you. 'Tis a pity though, as I should like to see how you fence. Let me think now—is there no one that can be found?—Yes, I know of some one. There is a man called Miyamoto Musashi here, who has been guilty of a crime. I have spoken several times of having him beheaded, but have always been prevented by the intercession of Amamori Nuinosuke, one of my retainers. We will get up a match between him and you. If he is defeated he is not worth keeping alive, if he conquers then I will spare his life, for he will have proved himself to be one of a thousand."

Ganryū no sooner heard the name of the son of the man whom he had so basely murdered than an involuntary thrill of fear shook his whole frame; but he immediately suppressed it, and replied:—"Certainly, I shall be glad to fence with any one you may like to appoint."

"Another crisis of my life has come," said Ganryū to himself after he had left Katsutoshi's presence. "This Miyamoto Musashi is the author of the Two-sworded-style. His fame is great in the world. Unless I am careful just as my reputation is approaching its zenith I shall be thrown back by another crushing defeat. I will not encounter him hastily. I will endeavour first to get some idea of his style."

Accordingly Ganryū gave out that he was ill and not fit to take part in the match. He then went to a man called Masaki Uneme, one of his old pupils, who had been made one of Katsutoshi's councillors, and asked him what kind of a fencer Musashi was.

"Musashi is no ordinary fencer" replied Uneme. "His crossed swords no mortal can break through. He is not one that you can afford to despise for an instant."

Ganryū's anxiety was increased by this remark ; and he replied :—"Before fencing with him myself, I should immensely like to see one of my pupils have a contest with him. Can you not manage to bring this about?"

Uneme did not at all relish having to act the lie in the way suggested ; but the request having come from his old teacher, he did not know how to refuse. So he went to Amamori Nuinosuke's house and said that one of his friends, a *samurai*, had come from Kyōto and was desirous of seeing Musashi's style of fencing.

Musashi, after trying in vain to put him off, agreed to fence with Uneme's friend. The friend was one of Ganryū's disciples. He brought a companion with the request that he too might be allowed to act as Musashi's opponent.

Ganryū and Uneme watched the contest from a concealed spot. Musashi fenced with fans; explaining to his opponents that it was not from contempt of their fencing powers that he did so, but on account of his having been accused of crime. "If the baron were to get to know that I had been fencing with a sword," said he, "I should get into a scrape." One of his opponents, thinking that this was only feigned humility, attacked Musashi with great fierceness; but stood not the slightest chance before him. The other tried his best, but with a similar result. They both returned to their houses, and Ganryū immediately asked them to explain to him the peculiarity of Musashi's style.

"That we cannot do" they replied. "All we know is that pressing against that cross of his was like pressing against a stone wall; and as for the way he handled the fans, it was something too complicated for us to follow."

"I agree with you," said Ganryū. "This fellow is no ordinary fencer. His movements were perfectly wonderful. He is not to be outdone in a hurry. But I should like to discover some way of overcoming him nevertheless."

Night and day Ganryū puzzled his brains to try and find out some mode of outwitting his foe. At last a thought struck him which seemed to promise success. Musashi would certainly get the better of him if he (Ganryū) confronted him with any ordinary weapon; but he could deceive Musashi by using some weapon with which he was not likely to be acquainted. He would encounter him with one of Hōzōin's *furisue*.^{*} Ganryū was delighted to think that at last he had hit on a plan that would enable him not only to conquer but perhaps to kill the man who was obstructing his path. He accordingly gave out that he had recovered from his sickness, and was prepared to fence with Musashi.

On conferring with Katsutoshi in reference to the contest, Ganryū remarked:—"I am confident that I shall defeat Musashi, but as his life depends on the result of this combat, it is not to be supposed that he will admit that he is defeated. I would advise therefore that constables be placed in readiness to arrest and slay him. Otherwise he will most certainly make his escape."

^{*} The *furisue*, or brandishing-stick, was a stick about three feet long that contained a chain with an iron ball attached to it. When the stick was projected the ball came out with sufficient force to kill a man. Hōzōin was a priest who invented what is called the *kudayari*, or tube-spear, which consists of a spear within a spear. By his name being connected with the *furisue* in the text, we may infer that he too was the inventor of this formidable weapon. Hōzōin took his name from the temple to which he belonged. He was a native of Yamato, a contemporary of Musashi's, and his original name was In-ei.

There was not much logic in these remarks of Ganryū. Since if he were man enough to defeat Musashi, it is natural to infer that he ought to be man enough to prevent his effecting his escape. Any baron with his wits about him would have seen that there was treachery in the heart of the man who spoke in this way. Ganryū was afraid of Musashi. He knew that, being his mortal enemy, in case the mean trick he intended to play on him was unsuccessful and no one interfered, it was more than likely that Musashi would kill him on the spot. The presence of the constables to assist him, if assistance were necessary, or to hurry off Musashi to execution, in case the bullet happened to stun but not kill him, was deemed by Ganryū to be a precaution absolutely essential to the success of his scheme. Katsutoshi agreed to act as Ganryū had advised.

On the day appointed, Katsutoshi and all his chief retainers assembled to see the contest. Before the fencing commenced, Ganryū addressed Musashi as follows:—"We meet for the first time. I am no other than Sasaki Ganryū Yoshitaka, the teacher of the best fencing in the country. You are a man who, though condemned to death, owing to the special favour of the baron, are allowed to fence with me. If by any possible chance you should succeed in defeating me, your life will be spared; otherwise you are to be put to death. Since, then, your life depends on the issue, it behoves you to do your very best."

"You" replied Musashi, "are a man whom I have long desired to meet. There is a matter about which I wish to make inquiry of you, but as it only concerns us two, it can be deferred till after our contest. Now we will see which of us is the better man."

Ganryū's guilty conscience made plain to him the import of these words.

Musashi now took his two swords and Ganryū his brandishing-stick, and the two confronted each other, looking very much like two tigers. The people waited in anxious suspense to see the result of the conflict. For a moment the combatants eyed each other, each watching his chance to attack the other. Then Ganryū, with a shout, made a cut at Musashi's head. Musashi received the blow on his crossed swords in his usual good form. But, to his surprise, immediately after the warding off of the blow, he felt a good deal of pain in his forehead, and the blood came streaming down his face. Knowing that Ganryū's weapon had not come near his face, he was at once aware that there had been foul play. Quickly he wiped the blood from his forehead and, turning to Ganryū, said :—"You mean fellow! You have acted treacherously! Such conduct is unworthy of a soldier. Come, fight like a man!"

With a smile of contempt, Ganryū replied :—"I am not going to argue with you. You have been defeated, and so

I leave the matter in the hands of the baron." Here he turned and looked at Katsutoshi, intending to intimate that he thought it time for the constables to be summoned.

On Musashi's again urging a renewal of the contest, Katsutohsi became very excited and, rising in his seat, said:—"When the contest has been decided against you, Musashi, you wish to fight again, do you?—scoundrel that you are! Arrest him."

Whereupon the constables who had been lying in ambush sprang up and, shouting *go jōi*,* surrounded Musashi on all sides. These men were armed with iron maces. Musashi, with his usual coolness, adroitness, and determination, knowing that his life depended on the issue, held his own against his assailants, knocking over some and kicking over others. Before many minutes had elapsed, the ground was strewn with the wounded and the dead. The constables, seeing with how little success their efforts met and with what ease Musashi killed or disabled any one who approached him, paused and stood watching the fencer like huntsmen watching a lion that has baffled all their attempts to capture him—alike disinclined to attack and to desist.

This gave Musashi an interval for thought, and immedi-

* Lit. "The will of a superior"; used when arrests were made, to signify that those who made the arrest were acting under orders from the authorities.



ately he made up his mind that his best plan would be to escape from the place as rapidly as possible. "I could kill Ganryū here," said he, "but in that case, I might lose my own life, as they would certainly do all that lies in their power to arrest me."

So, when Ganryū came forward with a real sword in his hand to attack Musashi, the latter, while quickly parrying stroke after stroke, receded till he reached the fence that surrounded the ring, then, with the agility for which from early boyhood he had been so noted, to the astonishment of the spectators, he cleared the high paling at a leap, and, as fleet as a deer, fled across the plain, his well trained legs in a very short time bearing him far away out of the reach of his numerous foes.

Leaving the hero of our story running at a wild pace in the direction of the capital, I proceed to relate what took place in Himeji after his departure. Lord Kinoshita, ignorant of the mean trick that had been played on Musashi, expressed before the assembled multitudes his admiration of the skill displayed by Ganryū on the occasion described above, and was just commencing to inform him that he intended to make him his instructor again, when he was suddenly interrupted by Amamori Nuinosuke; who came forward and said :—"Excuse me, my lord, for interrupting you, but it might be well to defer for the present the reward-

ing of Ganryū." Then, addressing Ganryū, he said, "You may return to your house : the baron will communicate with you later on."

Ganryū retired : and immediately after Nuinosuke made his way to the baron's private apartments and spoke to him as follows :—" The contest of to-day, my lord, as you are well aware, was only intended to be a trial of skill in one special line ; namely, in the use of fencing-swords. It was not designed to test which of the two men concerned was the better able to endanger or to destroy the life of his opponent. Ganryū's using a *furisue* therefore was an unfair advantage to take over an adversary. But, in addition to this, it was an insult offered to the spectators, since it seemed to imply that they were all too blind to see what was attempted. Of course had Musashi been aware that this weapon was to be used against him, he would have been on his guard against it. That taken unawares, he received a blow from the ball was no disgrace to him in any way whatever. Musashi, my lord, is an upright man. The accusation brought against him in reference to the sword he might easily have proved to be false had he been so disposed. What restrained him from taking any steps to justify himself was the fact that your lordship had given evidence that you considered the charge brought against him was not without foundation. With rare delicacy and nobleness of feeling,

he was unwilling even to testify to his own innocence if his testimony were likely to prove a means of exposing the hastiness of your lordship's decision in reference to him. If such a line of action had been adopted by one of your own retainers, you might with reason have been proud to know that you possessed a follower who would thus sacrifice, not only his own interests, but even, what is much dearer to the heart of a knight, his own reputation for integrity for the sake of preserving your name from reproach or dishonour. How much is all this intensified by the fact that Musashi is the retainer of another man, and one who is indebted to you for nothing but a small annual allowance of rice! Between these two men there can be no comparison. They move in different spheres. Ganryū is a mean-spirited, crafty fellow, and if your lordship decides to employ him there is no saying what trouble he may cause in the future. Then, excuse me for saying so, but I think you ought to pay some deference to your uncle Hideyoshi's opinion of this man. You took him into your service some years ago notwithstanding the fact that he had been previously banished from the capital by the express order of your uncle. He did not turn out to be the man you expected to find him. Now if, after his displaying such abominable meanness, you decide to receive him back into your employ, will it not appear as though you bestow

patronage irrespective of the merits or demerits of those whom you patronize—as though vice and virtue meet with a like reward at the hands of Lord Kinoshita ? ”

“ You are right,” replied Katsutoshi. “ I had no idea that Ganryū was the kind of man you represent. Deal with him as you think best.”

So, the day after the fencing match, when Ganryū was expecting the arrival of a messenger from Lord Kinoshita to inform him of the emoluments that had been bestowed on him, his servant announced that one of the retainers of Nuinosuke solicited an interview with him. On being ushered into the fencer’s presence, the retainer addressed him as follows :—“ Ganryū, yesterday by means of a wicked device you obtained the victory over your opponent. Your attempt to deceive the baron and all his attendants by a trick of that kind, was a piece of insolence and effrontery that it would be difficult to match. For this offence you are banished from the precincts of Himeji. Not even for another day will we endure your presence here. If you are slow in taking your departure, orders will be given to the *Bugyō* to expel you from the town by force.”

“ Again my hopes are dashed to the ground ! ” exclaimed Ganryū. “ Am I never to succeed in making for myself a name ? Am I for ever to be tantalized by seeing the prize snatched from me just as it seems to be within easy

reach?" But the orders were peremptory and they had to be obeyed or, instead of becoming the baron's teacher, he would find himself his prisoner. So, packing up his traps, with a heavy heart, Ganryū set out, once more turning his back on Himeji; to which he was destined never to return.

Two faithful disciples, Aoyama Mompei and Oshida Sakichi, whose hearts being equally wicked with his own, had sympathized with the many base acts of Ganryū's life, left the town in his company. To them, after clearing the town, he spoke as follows:—"I have never yet told you that it was I who killed Yoshioka Munisai. I hear that the man with whom I fenced yesterday was no other than Munisai's second son. Before commencing to fence he said that there was a matter about which he wished to make some inquiry of me. I have no doubt that the subject of the inquiry he purposed making was no other than his father's death. This being the case, there is nothing for it but for me to change my name and make a living by teaching fencing in some retired spot. I therefore am obliged to dismiss you from my service. If in the near or distant future I should find myself in a position in which I can with safety employ you, nothing would give me more pleasure than to have the advantage of your counsel again: till then farewell."

I now revert to the fortunes of Miyamoto Musashi. With his hair hanging down his back, his clothes torn or

cut and blood-stained in various places, with no sandals on his feet, a fencing-sword in his hand, swiftly dashed Musashi through village after village, much to the astonishment of the spectators. On and on he went, for he thought it not improbable that Ganryū would induce Katsutoshi to send soldiers after him : day and night he travelled, hardly stopping to take food, till he reached Kyōto ; when he found himself quite exhausted. Feeling as though he could not walk another step, and yet not possessing the wherewithal to purchase food, he knew that his only chance was to find some fencing-school where he might beg a meal.

While passing through Matsubara-dōri, he caught sight of a fencing-master's notice-board :—" A fencing school—Arima Kihei," were the words inscribed on the board.

" Very much like the name of the man I killed when I was a boy," exclaimed Musashi. " However, being a fencer, he will not refuse me a meal, I know."

So, walking up to the front-door of the house, Musashi said to the servant :—" Please go and tell your master that a warrior-pilgrim*, exhausted with hard travelling, has arrived and is desirous of obtaining a meal ; since your master is of the same profession as himself, he begs that he will take compassion on him."

* *Iw/o* Tale II. of this Series, p. 84, foot-note.

The servant, alarmed by Musashi's blood-stained garments and general appearance, did not wait to hear more, but in a flurried manner said :—"Excuse me! I will report what you say to my master."

"My master wishes you to come in ;" said the servant on his return.

Musashi proceeded to the fencer's sitting-room, where he found Kihei surrounded by a number of his disciples. "A warrior-pilgrim, I understand," said Kihei.

"Even so," replied Musashi. "I have come here, not for the purpose of fencing, but simply to ask you to be good enough to give me a meal. I have met with a disaster that might have cost me my life and have had to travel rapidly : I am quite exhausted."

"If that be the case, then here's rice," said Kihei. "Please take no notice of us* but eat to your heart's content."

Rice was served up, and Musashi commenced to devour it voraciously. Kihei's pupils had been intensely amused by the beggarly appearance of the visitor, and now they were none the less tickled by the enormous quantity of rice that he ate. "Well—'tis astonishing what some people can eat," exclaimed the pupils.

* It is customary in Japan, as elsewhere, to ask pardon for the rudeness of taking a meal before a looker on ; so to set his visitor at ease Kihei made this remark.

Musashi having finished his meal, Kihei said :—" Being a warrior-pilgrim, I have no doubt you are a good fencer. Now that you have refreshed yourself, suppose you give us an idea of your style by having a turn with one of us."

" From this I beg to be excused," replied Musashi. " It is my place as a student of fencing styles to ask you to allow me to cross swords with you, but having entered your house in this unexpected and somewhat impolite way, I do not wish to interrupt your pupils' exercises further by taking part in fencing."

Kihei looked well at Musashi, and perceiving that he was of a mild disposition, said to himself :—" This fellow is evidently not much of it. He does not look like a man who can fence. I will force a contest on him. His defeat will have a good effect on my pupils." So he replied :—" Now do please fence, sir, it will be no interruption to our exercises in any way ; on the contrary, it will be helpful to them."

Musashi persisted in refusing.

" What style do you practise ? " asked Kihei.

" The Two sworded," replied Musashi.

" The Two sworded, eh ! Miyamoto is the author of that style. You are a pupil of his then ? "

" No. I am Miyamoto himself."

A look, half of surprise and half of joy, came over Kihei's face as he listened to these words. For he was no

other than the adopted son of that Arima Kihei of Himeji whom Musashi had slain when a boy.* Kihei had long been desirous of avenging his adopted father's death by killing Musashi. He therefore said to himself:—"Now I have him in my power. I will slay him here. But it will not do to let him know who I am, lest he attempt to escape." So he replied:—"I have heard of your fame, sir, but this is the first time I have had the privilege of meeting you. I cannot possibly allow you to leave my house without seeing your style. Please fence with one of my pupils first, I will cross swords with you afterwards."

The pupils all looked at each other in mute astonishment and dismay at this proposal. They had been overawed by hearing Musashi's name even, and now when told to encounter the author of so far famed a style they grew pale with fright.

Kihei, seeing this, said to himself:—"There is nothing so much to be afraid of in the author of a style as these chicken-hearted fellows imagine. I will encounter him, Should I be defeated,—why, then I can kill him by some stratagem or other." So, turning to Musashi, he said:—"As none of my pupils seem to relish a bout with you, though but a poor opponent to one like yourself, I will try what I can do." Then, without further prelude, rushing at

* *Vide* Pt. I, p. 188.

Musashi, he dealt a heavy blow at his head : which Musashi received in his usual style on his crossed swords. Enraged by finding that he could do nothing against his foe, Kihei drew a dagger from his bosom and hurled it at Musashi. Parrying the weapon with his left sword, Musashi brought his right sword down with great force on Kihei's shoulder. Kihei staggered and rolled over with the force of the blow. His pupils were enraged by the sight of their master's fall and, full of chagrin, all set on Musashi pell-mell.

Musashi, while adroitly defending himself against them, raised his voice and said :—" You set of fools ! Do you think that because a man is defeated in a fencing-ring that therefore all present should set on the victor ? " He laid to right and left, and soon knocked over some seven or eight of his foes. Then, while the remainder were crouching away in the corner of the fencing-yard looking too frightened to approach him, he said :—" There is not one of you that deserves to live, but out of consideration for the rice of which I have partaken in this house, I will spare your lives, that is, if you will keep quiet : any fresh attack on me shall be the signal for my cutting you to pieces one after another." Thus saying, our hero calmly walked out of the house ; and there being no one that cared to follow him, he went on his way unmolested.

Musashi now left Kyōto and travelled westward. He supposed that Ganryū was still in Himeji, but after what had happened he thought it would not do to proceed to that town at once, and yet he felt very anxious to know how things were going on there; so he went as far as Tsuyama, in Saku-shū. At this place he fenced with a very noted swordsman, Yoshioka Kembō. This fencer was one of Munisai's old pupils, but had been expelled from the school owing to his licentious conduct.*

Musashi and Kembō fenced in the presence of the Earl of Tsuyama on this occasion. The match was a drawn one. The fact was that their styles closely resembled each other. Kembō was a thorough master of Munisai's style, and consequently in the use of one of the swords was quite equal to Musashi. Musashi spent some little time with Kembō, disclosed to him the mission in which he was engaged, and related to him the adventures he had met with on his pilgrimage. The two fencers had warm sympathy for each other, for, though Kembō lived such a licentious life and though his lack of self-control subsequently led to his death, he was in disposition honest, generous, and brave. His love for his old fencing master Munisai was genuine and fervent, and

* It was one of the conditions of discipleship in the best ancient fencing schools that the pupils should live honest and moral lives. Rules bearing on morals were drawn up whose violation involved expulsion from the school.

his delight knew no bounds when he found that the Shichinosuke of whom he had often heard in days gone by was no other than the illustrious author of the Two-sworded-style,

“ Were you less skilled,” said Kembō, “ I would willingly assist you to kill Ganryū ; but I plainly see that you are fully qualified for the task you have undertaken. Take care of yourself, my lad, and that you will accomplish your purpose I have not the slightest doubt.”

The few happy days of his stay with Kembō having rapidly passed, as happy days are wont to do, disregarding an earnest request from the Earl of Tsuyama that he would remain some time at the castle, Musashi, who never for a moment allowed anything however pleasant to divert him from the one great purpose of his life, turned his back on Tsuyama and directed his steps to Himeji.

Musashi felt a pang at parting with Kembō. For, though a man of great strength of purpose, independence of spirit and with extraordinary powers of endurance, our hero was not without a softer side to his nature which often yearned for sympathy. In all his wanderings few were the men that he met with whom his heart beat in concord or whose principles and lives he held in admiration. Kembō was one of those men whose ideal was high though in some respects his attainments were low and who therefore when sober made a most charming companion. His conversation

was lively and high-toned, and, like Musashi, there was nothing that pleased him more than to have to use his sword in the defence of innocence or in the punishment of guilt.

In this connection it may be remarked that in Japan as a rule drink does not debase the whole character. There was in ancient times and there is still to-day a large number of well educated and much respected men given to habitual heavy drinking. Such men are most scrupulous in the performance of all their duties and never drink when on duty. They are highly honourable in all their dealings, kind-hearted, generous, unselfish and in many ways even self-denying. Intoxication seems to be with them quite separate from their ordinary lives. But drunkenness is going out of fashion in Japan as it has long since gone out of fashion in England. There is one thing that is worth remembering in connection with Japanese tipplers. Most of them can refrain from excess whenever they think it obligatory on them to do so. Hence it is that cases of officials, military or civil, being found tipsy when on duty are almost unheard of in this country. It is because occasional intoxication has not interfered with the even tenor of everyday life, has not blunted the sense of honour, has not made those who have been guilty of it less estimable as friends in their sober hours, that it is no great detraction to the Japanese gentleman to-day to hint that he

is fond of the bottle. In old Japan drunkenness may be said to have been regarded as a harmless weakness;* and it is so regarded to-day by all Japanese of the old school. But Japanese educated in Europe or America usually object to drunkenness because it is not the fashion in the West or because of its preventing men from being at their best on all occasions. Keen competition is stamping out the habit here as in Western countries.

To return to my story, on his reaching Himeji, Musashi made inquiries as to the fortunes of Ganryū, and was told that he had been dismissed from the baron's service. So, retracing his steps, he passed through Sakushū, and pushed on to Bizen. He heard that at Okayama there was a noted fencer called Shirakura Gengoemon who had lately been taken into the service of the baron of that place. He inquired about this man and was informed that he was a most plausible talker—that he always had the knack of saying something which pleased his master. "This is no doubt Ganryū," said Musashi to himself. So, changing his name, he went to visit Gengoemon, but was disappointed to find that this fencer was not the man he sought. "Gengoemon evidently is not a man of much skill," thought Musashi, "if one can judge by his pomposity. However, as I have

* Vide the description given of Hideyoshi's drunken carousal in my *New Life of Toyotomi Hideyoshi*, pp. 204, 205.

come here for the purpose of fencing, *nolens volens*, fence I must." A number of Gengoemon's pupils were set to fence with Musashi first; but being defeated one after another, Gengoemon himself came forward. He was no match for the author of the Two-sworded-style. His sword was knocked out of his hand, and subsequently a heavy blow on one of his legs upset his balance and brought him to the ground.

Gengoemon saw that there was nothing for it but to feign humility. So, bowing his head, he said:—"I am not your equal, sir. It has been reported of late that the author of the Two-sworded-style, Miyamoto Musashi, is on a fencing tour round the country. A man who uses two swords as skilfully as you can be no other than he."

"To see a performance and to know by its character who the performer is argues keen discernment," replied Musashi. "You are right, I am Miyamoto. For a special reason I changed my name before I came to fence with you, please forgive the deception."

To which Gengoemon replied:—"That a man of your attainments should have crossed the threshold of my house, is a piece of good luck which I never expected to have. Come, dear sir, and be my guest." Taking Musashi by the hand, he led him to the chief seat in his sitting-room, and continued, "I have long heard of your fame, and my

desire to meet with you can only be compared to the longings of a child for its mother. I trust that you will consent to become my teacher and that the bond which binds a pupil to his instructor may bind us two together indissolubly."

"If this be your mind, I will most gladly teach you," replied Musashi, who never seemed to doubt professions of friendship however insincere they might be.

Though Gengoemon spoke thus, in reality he was smarting under the defeat which he had experienced, and had determined to kill Musashi whenever a good opportunity offered itself.

Three or four months rolled by; Gengoemon taking lessons from Musashi day by day. The latter did not begrudge the time spent in this manner; for in those days one of the best ways of obtaining information on almost any subject was to reside at a fencing-school; since such places were visited by hundreds of fencing tourists. Hardly a day passed but one or two adventurers arrived, who, after fencing with the master of the school, related their experiences. Musashi thought that it was probable that Ganryū would set up a school of fencing under some false name or other, and that it was not unlikely that some itinerant fencer who dropped in casually at Gengoemon's fencing-yard would reveal something that would give him a clue to the whereabouts of his foe, so day after day and week after week he

listened attentively to the longest and prosiest of yarns. But when a good time had elapsed without any special news reaching him, he began to grow impatient, and felt that it would not be well for him to remain in Okayama any longer. Gengoemon, it seemed to him, was not a fencer who promised to become a credit to his teacher; and as a man he did not grow on acquaintance. In fact, sometimes Musashi seemed to see signs of downright insincerity in his professed friendship. But in this he thought he might be mistaken: as long as Gengoemon's outward acts all appeared to be honest and straightforward, it certainly was not for him to show that he suspected that his host's innermost thoughts and intentions were far otherwise.

While these and similar surmisings were passing through Musashi's mind, Gengoemon was plotting his death. Well aware that though he had made considerable progress in his study of the Two-sworded-style, he was no match for its author in fencing, Gengoemon felt that it would be fruitless to attempt to kill Musashi in any ordinary way—that he must resort to treachery of some kind or other. So one day, when Musashi was away, Gengoemon assembled some dozen of the most unprincipled and unscrupulous of his pupils, revealed to them his intention of killing Musashi and asked each of them to say what he thought would be the best mode of carrying out his design.

Whereupon each one made his suggestion. "I will take him to a restaurant," said one, "and get him to drink *sake* till he is dead drunk, and then when he is off his guard I will run my sword through him."

"Very easily said, but not so easily accomplished," replied one of his companions. "Do you think that a man like Musashi, even though tipsy, would not be more than a match for you? If you wish to throw away your life foolishly, that I should say would be a good way of doing it."

"Why not make a hole in the ceiling of some room or in the roof of some passage where Musashi is likely to pass, and then as he passes under the hole run a spear through him?" asked another.

"An excellent device, if you could only insure its success," replied a third. "But suppose the spearman were to miss his aim, as it is not improbable he would, do you think that either he or those of us who stood ready to assist him would leave the house alive?"

Two other proposals somewhat resembling these were made: one being that a man should hide beneath the veranda and run a spear through Musashi as he walked along; and the other that a heavy stone should be suspended by a rope over the room that he occupied: and that when he was under it, the rope should be cut and the stone allowed to fall and crush him.

Gengoemon disapproved of all these plans, and had one of his own which he proposed as follows:—"In my opinion your plans would none of them be likely to succeed. I have a better one. You know that I have been making a bath of late.* Well, it is now finished; but no one has used it as yet. Suppose I invite you and some others to an entertainment given in connection with the commencement of hot water bathing in this house. Then we will ask Musashi to enter the bath first, and when he is in, we will shut down the cover, pour in hot water, and boil him to death."

"Good, good!" they all exclaimed. "You may be excelled in fencing, teacher, but in fruitfulness of resource, in general shrewdness—never."

Some few days after this, Musashi was informed that there was to be a feast in Gengoemon's house that evening and was asked to be present. Without any suspicion he accepted the invitation. Gengoemon was very pressing with his *sake*, and Musashi drank freely. When slightly tipsy, he said:—"I feel as if I had had a drop too much. I should like to retire. I beg you to excuse me."

"Don't be in such a hurry," replied Gengoemon. "I have been constructing a bath lately, as perhaps you have heard. Well, it is now ready for use; and to-night we are all going to bathe in it for the first time. The water

* Sometimes made of wood and sometimes of plaster.

is now hot and I should take it as a great favour if you would be the first to enter. It is but right that our teacher should bathe first."

"Thanks: no;" replied Musashi. "As I feel rather the worse for liquor to-night, a hot bath would do me no good. Please excuse me."

"The bath here is not one of those small low ones, sir, in which there is no room to breathe," remarked one of Gengoemon's pupils. "There is lots of space in which to move about, so you need not fear its bringing on dizziness of the head or anything of that kind as the ordinary baths do."

Musashi consented; and entered the bath. No sooner was he in than the cover was put on and barred, and hot water was poured in from the side. "It is too hot," cried Musashi, "give me some cold water, will you."

No reply was heard, and more hot water came rushing into the bath. Again Musashi called; but still no answer. He now suspected foul play; and, in a frenzy of rage and despair, exclaiming, "You abominable villain!" put forth all his strength, and, smashing the cover into shivers, sprang out.

"He is out! he is out!" shouted Gengoemon to his followers. "Quick! quick! don't let him escape!"

Musashi was more than a match for them all. From his boyhood numbers had never alarmed him. With the

most extraordinary coolness and agility again and again in the course of his life he had leapt about scathless in the midst of his foes. When he issued from the bath he was weaponless, and yet surrounded by men with drawn swords. Though mad with rage, he never for a moment lost his presence of mind. In an instant he kicked or knocked over some five or six of Gengoemon's pupils; and then, catching sight of the large wooden bar that had been used to secure the cover of the bath, "a god-send, indeed!" he exclaimed, and, snatching up the bar, immediately singled out Gengoemon as the one object of attack. Felling to the ground two or three pupils who attempted to stop his progress, he was on Gengoemon's heels just as the latter was commencing to flee:—"You craven-hearted, unprincipled villain, die the death!" muttered Musashi between his clenched teeth.

Gengoemon drew his sword and warded off one or two blows, but he was no match for his foe: one heavy stroke from whose bar brought him to the ground a dead man.

His pupils, seeing this, fled helter-skelter in all directions, shouting:—"Murder! murder!"

A few minutes after the above tragedies, just as Musashi was drinking a little water to stay the most tremendous thirst that he had ever experienced, (brought

on doubtless by the *sake* and the over-heated bath combined), he saw Gengoemon's wife approaching him, with a halberd in her hand. "I cannot allow the slayer of my husband to escape," she exclaimed.

"Are you simple enough to think that your husband's foe is one that can be killed by a woman?" asked Musashi. "Your attempt is a foolish one. I am sorry to have to send you to the other world." The woman attacked Musashi desperately. He treated her as he had treated her husband, killing her outright.*

No sooner had he accomplished this than a sense of the danger to which he was exposed as long as he remained in Gengoemon's house came over him. So, rushing back to the bath room, he snatched up the thin garment in which he had gone to the bath. (all his fighting, it must be borne in mind, having been done while quite naked), and, taking his two swords, which, as luck would have it, he found lying untouched in his room, he dashed out of the house and tore along through back

* It will doubtless strike the reader that this act was out of harmony with the rest of Musashi's life. It was his invariable practice to spare the weak. But the circumstances were peculiar. Musashi was mad with rage at the abominable treachery with which he had been treated, and hence it is probable that he hardly stopped to think of what he was doing. But if he did think about it, then the assent of Gengoemon's wife to the actions of her husband would have seemed to him to justify his killing her: Alike wicked, Musashi thought that husband and wife merited the same punishment.



streets with the speed of a hare fleeing before the hounds. It was a bitter night ; snow was falling heavily ; a cutting wind was blowing, and few people were about, so Musashi cleared the town unobserved and unpursued.





CHAPTER II.

Gengoemon's pupils reported at the castle that their master had been slain.

The Baron, Ukita Hide-ie, sent officers to the house to inquire into the matter. They found the dead bodies of Gengoemon and his wife, and, near them, the corpses of five of Gengoemon's pupils. In different parts of the house there lay some eight wounded and disabled men—all pupils of Gengoemon.* The door of the bath, shivered in bits, showed what had taken place. From the wounded men the officers learned that an attempt had been made on Musashi's life, and that the scene of desolation and death that they now beheld was the result.

"Then Shirakura has died the dog's death that his abominable treachery merited," said the officers, "and we are not the ones to take any steps to punish the man who killed him, even were he found."

Musashi made his way to the mountains, intending to cross over to Bitchū. In feudal times any one who feared being arrested had only to cross the frontier that divided the territory in which he had committed an

* Allowing for those who fled, the number of men that took part in the plot must have been over twenty.

offence from that belonging to the neighbouring baron and he was safe, unless in some very special cases. Musashi had a good idea of the direction he was to take, but having to avoid the public roads, and it being a snowy dark night. after he had gone on some little time, he found himself surrounded on all sides by mountains too lofty to be ascended. He wandered about hither and thither, hoping to discover some mountain-path running in the direction that he wished to take, but no such path did he find. Cold, hungry, and miserable, he tried now this direction and now that, until even *his* indomitable will seemed as if it must succumb to the force of adverse circumstances. He thought that there was nothing for it but to perish of cold or run the risk of being arrested by going to some house and asking for shelter. Just as his spirits were at their lowest, he stumbled across a small unused shrine. Into it he entered and searched about for food. Finding nothing, he tore down the old tattered curtain that hung before the entrance and, coiling himself up in it, lay down on the bare boards. But the wind whistled through the crevices of the little shed and the snow drifted in at its entrance: sleep was out of the question. Just as he was thinking that he must seek shelter elsewhere he heard voices in the distance. The sounds came nearer and nearer. He

gazed intensely into the darkness and presently discerned the forms of two stalwart men leading a woman. "A cold night, with a vengeance," said one of them as he approached the shed.

"Anyhow we have a prize, replied his companion."
"Let's make a fire, cook some rice, and warm up a bit."

"Well said;" answered the other.

The two now commenced to gather fuel; and having lit a fire, warmed themselves by it. The woman they bound to a tree. She was gagged, and looked the very picture of misery.* "These fellows are robbers," said Musashi to himself. "A piece of ill-luck their having encountered a man like me!—as they will discover presently." Drawing himself up with an air of importance, Musashi now marched between the two men and said:—"Let me warm myself a little, will you."

The two looked at Musashi with utter astonishment. Observing that he had only one thin garment on, they thought that he was doubtless one of those ascetics who in cold weather are in the habit of going to pray to the gods with little or no clothing. "What request have you come to this out of the way place to make?" asked one of the robbers.

* It was customary in those days to steal women and sell them to the keepers of brothels.

"I have come to pray," replied Musashi, smiling, "that I may be enabled to punish all robbers and put a stop to their evil doings."

"What stuff!" replied the robber. "For a half-naked man like you to think that he can subdue all the robbers in the land, is like expecting to ladle out the water of the ocean with a shell. If you have any regard for your safety, you had better be off. We are robbers."

"If that be the case," replied Musashi, "then I have a request to make of you: I have been deprived of my clothes by a robber; and, since robbing is your trade, suppose now that you give me the clothes you have on, they were doubtless stolen, and that you go and take the clothes which were stolen from me, they are in the hands of one of your associates no doubt."*

"You said just now," replied the robber, "that you had been praying for strength to subdue all robbers; and now you say that your clothes have been taken from you

* Musashi's clothes were of course left in Gengoemon's house. What he meant was that the man who had deprived him of his clothes was a rogue, and hence one of the same class as the man to whom he spoke, and that therefore the robber before him was the right kind of man to search for them; as the saying goes, "Set a thief to catch a thief." The whole thing was a joke, however, and perhaps intentionally obscure, the object of Musashi being to keep the men quiet while he warmed his limbs, anticipating that he would soon need to make use of them.

by a robber. Is it likely that one who is too weak to prevent his clothes being stripped from his back will ever be able to suppress robbery? We shall not give you our clothes. It is our trade to take clothes but not to give away what we have taken."

"Well," replied Musashi, "if you don't know how to hand me the clothes, I will teach you how it can be done."

"You talk big, indeed, you naked rascal! What do you mean by it?" said the robber, drawing a long hunter's sword that hung in his belt and attacking Musashi. Not deigning to use a weapon against foes so ignominious, Musashi sprang at his assailant and, seizing his right arm, sent him flying through the air.

The other robber came to the rescue. Avoiding the stroke aimed at him by this man, Musashi thrust his fist into his side, taking his breath away and rendering him quite helpless.*

It was some little time before the two men recovered from the effects of this rough dealing: when they did, they united in imploring Musashi to spare their lives; and

* The first of the feats described above was one often performed by ordinary wrestlers; the second was a trick well known to all students of *yawara*.

Vide Part I, p. 169 *et seq.* for an account of *yawara*.

the man who had been asked for his clothes immediately stripped them off and said:—"They are very poor, sir, but such as they are please take them."

"What is in that box?" asked Musashi, pointing to a box that stood near the fire.

"Boiled rice," replied the robber.

"Bring it here."

"And in that bottle?" asked Musashi.

"*Sake*," replied the robber.

"Bring that too."

Sitting down, Musashi took a hearty meal, and after it felt himself again. "Now," said he to the men, "I want to know who this woman is."

"A woman whom we have captured and whom we proposed selling," replied the robber.

"Free her," said Musashi. "Such creatures as you are not worthy of being kept alive, but since I am indebted to you for food and clothing, I will spare your lives."

Approaching the woman, Musashi said:—"Set your mind at ease, my good woman, you are safe in my hands. I am no other than Miyamoto Musashi, now on a fencing tour round the country. I will see that you are sent back to your house in safety. From whence do you come?"

"From Bitchū, sir," replied the woman, "from the

neighbourhood of Matsuyama ; my husband is a large farmer named Takata Jūbei. I was on my way to a shrine to worship when this calamity overtook me."

Seeing that Musashi was engaged in talking to the woman, and thinking to take him unawares and kill him, the robbers drew their swords and rushed at him. But again he was too quick for them: in an instant they were both within his iron grasp. "You villains! I will spare your lives no longer," exclaimed Musashi.

"Please do, sir, please do," ejaculated the robbers.

"I was so cold, sir, that I could not refrain from attacking you," said the robber who had delivered up his clothes.

"Well, then, I will save your lives," replied Musashi; "but you shall work for them. One of you is to carry this woman on his back, and the other to make a torch and bear it before us to her husband's house." Thus they made their way to Jūbei's house where, as may be imagined, they received a hearty welcome.

Musashi remained with Jūbei for some time, owing to an illness from which he had been suffering, brought on by the over-heated bath.

Musashi had heard from some traveller, either while in Gengoemon's house, or while staying with the farmer, of a fencer in Tsuruga who by the description given he thought

might be Ganryū. So, with a good sum of money in his purse—a thank-offering from the farmer—Musashi set out for that place. On his way he missed the road and wandered away into the mountains. The paths that he followed became narrower and narrower and the forest thicker and thicker. He might have retraced his steps when he found out his mistake, but, to tell the truth, Musashi's extreme love of adventure and his steadfast belief in his power to extricate himself from any number of difficulties that either the machinations of his foes or fortuitous circumstances might place in his way, led him to go where it was not absolutely necessary that he should go and to encounter dangers that a more cautious, not to say a less brave, man would have shunned. Thinking that if he climbed one of the surrounding hills he would certainly see some place in the distance for which he could make, Musashi chose one of the least steep of them and commenced to ascend. But he found that he had been deceived in the height of the hill, and that after climbing for some time he seemed to be no nearer its summit than when he started. All his attempts either to find a broad path near at hand or to get a glimpse of a village in the distance proved fruitless. In the midst of his perplexity he caught sight of two men who looked like hunters, to whom he shouted:—"I have lost my way : please tell me which path to take."

The men looked at Musashi for an instant and then ran away as fast as they could.

Wondering what could have made them so much afraid of him, Musashi determined that he would go on till he arrived at some place where he could ask the way. He followed the direction which the men had taken, and before long came to a magnificent gate which seemed to be the entrance to somebody's residence. Near the gate was a shanty, in which lived the gate-keeper. To him Musashi said:—"I have lost my way; and as it is now getting late, I should be glad if your master would put me up here for the night."

The gate-keeper forthwith went to his master and reported the arrival of the stranger, and presently returned and invited Musashi to enter. The visitor was treated with the greatest deference and politeness, water being brought for him to wash his feet and various other little civilities shown him. Nevertheless, as he passed through the house to the back rooms, the general appearance of the place excited his wonder: not a woman was visible anywhere; the house had none of the usual ornaments or appendages of dwelling-houses, the walls being lined with nothing but swords, spears, bows, arrows, and the like. Musashi was shown into a small room, and told to wait there while the servant went to see whether his master was ready to receive him.

After Musashi had remained in this room some little time, the servant returned and said that he would now conduct him into his master's presence, but that first he must request him to take off his swords and entrust them to his care.

"I know of no rule which obliges a *samurai* to take off his swords before being received by a host," replied Musashi.

"I am aware, sir," said the servant, "that such is not the rule in most houses, but in this house it happens to be so, and all who visit us are obliged to conform to it."

"Well, then; I will conform," replied Musashi, thinking to himself as he said it, "Swords or no swords, I am a match for any one of them, or all of them combined, for that matter."

The house in which Musashi found himself was no other than that of the famous robber-chief Ikazuchi Gonkurō. The two highwaymen Musashi encountered on the night of his leaving Gengoemon's house were followers of Gonkurō; and they too were the men who had caught sight of him in the mountain-pass a little time before. They had hurried on to acquaint their chief with the approach of Musashi, having previously informed him that Musashi was one of the most formidable of men. Gonkurō, therefore, had set to work and made the most elaborate preparations for

encompassing Musashi's death. The house was filled with armed men, who all stood in readiness to assist their chief in preventing Musashi's escape. The robbers in immediate attendance on Gonkurō were four in number—all of gigantic size. Their names were—Yamabachi Gontarō, Arakuma Tarō, Imomushi Danpei and Mogura Rokuzō.

Into the presence of these men and a number of other robbers, all armed to the teeth, then, Musashi was ushered.

"You are on a fencing tour, I hear," said the robber-chief, with a supercilious smile on his lips. "A wonderful thing, indeed, for one like you! What may your name be?"

"I am no other than Miyamoto Musashi Masa-akira, the retainer of Katō Kiyomasa, Governor of the Kumamoto castle and Lord of Higo," answered Musashi, in a cool and dignified manner.

"Ah, you are Musashi, are you. Then," continued Gonkurō, "I have something about which I wish to speak to you. You will doubtless recollect that last year you seized a woman who belonged to two of my followers. On that occasion too I hear that you vainly boasted that you were appointed by Heaven to subdue all the highway-men in the land. I am no other than the chief of the men whom you are ambitious of subjugating. How do you feel about the matter now, after seeing me in my own dominions?"

Raising his voice, Musashi replied:—"There is no

place under heaven, be it ever so out of the way, that is not included in the dominion of the king of the country in which it is situated? How then shall a set of mountain-robbers who do nothing but break the king's laws, escape the judgment of Heaven? I am one that bears two swords: I bear them for no other purpose than to enable me to punish wrong wherever I find it. I therefore cannot allow such as you to go unpunished."

"You speak of having two swords," replied the robber; "but are they not at present in my possession? What then can you do? If you talk in this boastful manner I'll send your head flying through the air in a brace of shakes."

"Do you think that a wicked man's blade would cut the body of a righteous man like Miyamoto Musashi?—not a bit of it!" retorted Musashi.

"You jabbering young monkey!" interposed Yamabachi. "We'll stop that tongue of yours by cutting it out."

Thus saying, Yamabachi, drew his sword and attacked Musashi. Musashi avoiding the stroke, with the speed of lightning rushed at his assailant and, delivering a sharp blow on the arm in which he held his sword, caused it to drop out of his hand.* Musashi had no sooner got rid of

* Experts in *jūjutsu* are acquainted with the art of striking or pressing a muscle of the arm so that anything held in it falls to the ground, and of pressing a muscle of the hand when in the grasp of an antagonist and thus loosening the tightest grip.

this robber than he found himself enveloped in the arms of another—a man of gigantic size. Again resorting to a trick, he pressed the man's hands, disentangled himself from his embrace, and, striking a particular muscle of his thigh, sent him rolling to the ground. This was the signal for a general attack: all the robbers in the room and several others, who on hearing the scuffle had hastened to the scene of the affray, set on Musashi pell-mell. He held his own magnificently against them all. Gonkurō, seeing this, with a loud voice gave a signal. Whereupon, sliding doors were thrown back, and five or six men standing with loaded and pointed guns were revealed. Orders were given to fire. But instantaneous discharge of the deadly weapons was out of the question; as the room in which the contest was going on was still half full of robbers, whose lives would have been jeopardized by any attempt to shoot Musashi. This gave the latter time to protect himself against this new and formidable danger. His mode of doing it was no less amusing than clever. He seized Gonkurō and placing him between himself and the pointed guns, quietly awaited the result. "Hold, hold! Don't fire! don't fire!" shouted the robber-chief.

Musashi handled Gonkurō as though he were a child. His struggles were all in vain: and so tight was he squeezed that he groaned with pain.

The effect of this on Gonkurō's followers was very remarkable. They had followed and obeyed Gonkurō hitherto in the belief that the man who could master him was not to be found. They had bowed to superior brute strength with the blind instinct of men whose natures had lost most of their distinctively human qualities. But now they saw him whom they thought to be invincible as helpless as an infant in the hands of a man not much more than half his size. The spectacle overawed and subdued them. The respect which they had felt for the robber-chief passed away like a dream, and there took its place an intense veneration for, amounting almost to worship of the man whose captive Gonkurō had become. "Please, sir, spare our chief," they all exclaimed. "We beseech you not to kill him. We have treated you badly; but, oh, please forgive us, and spare our master's life."

Squeezing Gonkurō still tighter, until his groaning was something pitiable to listen to, Musashi replied :—"No, no; I will do as I said, I will make an end of you lawless miscreants one and all. Your master shall die first and all of you afterwards."

"Till now," exclaimed Gonkurō, "I have never known what mercy meant; not even in my dreams has a notion of its nature ever crossed my mind. Often have I subjected victims to cruel deaths, and often have they pleaded for

mercy, but their entreaties have fallen on the ears of a man who, being ignorant of pain, knew not what mercy was. Now, sir, you have taught me to value mercy and kindness above everything else. I humbly beg that you will spare my life; and, as you say that you cannot spare the life of a robber, I solemnly promise that henceforth I will refrain from robbery—that henceforth I will live the life of an honest citizen."

"If this be your resolve," replied Musashi, "then I will save your life. But, being a robber, your simple word is not to be depended on. If I were to set you free now you would at once attempt to kill me. Till I have a satisfactory guarantee that not you only but every one of your followers will from this time forth renounce the lives of robbers and become honest men, I shall not release you. The first thing that I demand is, that the guns yonder be all fired off outside the house, and then that they and all the bows and arrows in your possession be collected and burnt. The next that a document be prepared in which it be stated that you all from henceforth solemnly renounce robbery. This document is to be sealed with the blood of everyone of you in turn."

To this they all agreed: the weapons were burned, the document prepared and sealed as directed, and Gonkurō was set free.

The robber-chief rose, and, taking Musashi by the hand, in a profoundly reverential manner led him to the most honourable seat in his room and, bowing down before him, spoke as follows:—"I was not originally a highwayman but, like yourself, a warrior. I grew poor, and so by degrees commenced to steal, and the occupation not being without its charms for one so fond of adventure as I was, I gradually grew deeper and deeper involved in crime until I became a robber-chief. I hail with delight this opportunity of returning to my former life. I beg, sir, that before we part you will do me the favour of drinking my health."

"Certainly, certainly," replied Musashi. "'Be not ashamed to repent of a fault when you have committed it.' Golden words these! Those that aim to live the lives of brave knights, should take care that they are not the means of bringing dishonour on their noble ancestors and that they hand down to posterity a name untarnished by evil deeds."

The highwaymen parted the money which had been accumulated by years of crime, and then, after burning the house in which they had lived, they took leave of each other. As they stood watching beam after beam and rafter after rafter of their mountain-home disappearing until nothing but a heap of burning embers was left, Musashi

said to them :—" So disappears all ill-gotten gain ! Its glory exists for a moment and then passes away ! It is as the sage says, ' The honour which proceeds from unrighteous gain vanishes like a cloud.' Consequently, if we wish to be esteemed by our descendants as well as by our contemporaries, we must do what is just and right. We shall all meet again somewhere or other, I doubt not. Take care of yourselves. Let each one of you do what is right and act the man, and so our meeting will be a mutual pleasure."

Gonkurō, Yamabachi, and Arakuma, under other names, subsequently became retainers of Mōri Terumoto : Gonkurō and Arakuma went to Korea and lost their lives there. Yamabachi lived to the age of seventy-eight and died in his bed.





CHAPTER III.

Musashi reached Tsuruga in Echizen without further adventure, and visited the various fencing schools of the neighbourhood, but neither saw nor heard of Ganryū. Kanazawa, in Kaga, was then a large castle town situated near Tsuruga, so Musashi thought it well to visit it before leaving that part of the country. Though he obtained no information here as to the whereabouts of his foe, he heard that there resided in the hills near an old priest who was a most skilful fencer.

"What an idea!" exclaimed Musashi to the man who informed him of this. "An emaciated old priest living in the hills being able to fence! What shall we hear next?—Anyhow I will go and see the old man, as reports of this kind are seldom altogether without foundation."

Musashi inquired the way to the old priest's dwelling, and on reaching it found an infirm-looking old man sitting by the hearth warming his hands. "I have heard of your fame, sir," said Musashi, "and, being on a fencing tour, have come to ask you to give me a few lessons."

"Ah, young man! So you have found your way here, have you," observed the old priest. "Ah, well! the time was when I was fond of fencing, but, as the saying is,

'An inexpert fencer comes in for heavy blows.*' This was my experience and so I gave it up. Now, old as I am, were I to fence it would only end in my defeat."

"I have doubtless been misinformed," said Musashi to himself. "This old fellow evidently knows nothing about fencing. If he were a fencer there would surely be some signs thereof in his house. The house does not seem to contain a single fencing sword. It would be of little use to fence with an old fellow like this, but still, having come all this way, I should like to convince myself that he is not specially skilled before leaving his house."

"Excuse me," said Musashi, and seated himself by the old priest's side: then, snatching up a piece of firewood, he aimed a blow at his head.

The old man instantaneously dodged his head on one side and avoided the blow; then, seizing a fire-iron, with it won an easy victory over Musashi, on one occasion during the contest throwing him violently to the ground.

Overcome with astonishment, Musashi knelt down before the old priest and said:—"A novice in fencing, I came here to-day in entire ignorance that I was visiting

* The old man intended this remark for Musashi—the meaning being that in fencing as in other things a little knowledge is dangerous, and that probably Musashi was one of those whose limited knowledge of the art made him desirous of fencing with every stranger that he met.

a swordsman so perfect as yourself. I have behaved most rudely to you. Your superior skill overawes me, and I have no words with which to excuse myself. I beg that you will kindly allow me to become your disciple."

"I admire your style very much," replied the old man. "You fence remarkably well. But there is something I have to say to you, so come in here," leading the way into a little room. The old priest commenced to talk about fencing. His remarks were such as Musashi had never listened to before. He drank them in with rapt attention. The conversation over, Musashi quietly set to work and cleaved wood, drew water and cleaned the house, in fact, did all the work of a servant. The old priest, seeing this, made up his mind to entrust Musashi with the secret of his style.

Every author of a fencing style had an occult art which he never disclosed to any but his most trusted disciples. This art the old man taught Musashi. Of what exactly it consisted the narrative gives us no idea. The terms used in describing such occult arts are so vague and so impregnated with popular superstitions that it is seldom possible to get any clear notion from them of the nature of the acquirements which gave some fencers such superiority over their foes. Of whatever the art consisted with this Musashi became acquainted, and he left the old man's

house feeling as elated as if he had been on a visit to paradise. On taking leave he inquired, "May I ask your name?"

"My name I cannot reveal to you," replied the old priest. "All I can tell you is, that I am a single sword that has buried itself in the mountains."

Musashi thought over this and said to himself:—"There are not many men in the country who excel me in fencing—of this I am sure. The old man says he is "a single sword." He is no doubt Ittōsai (the one-sworded man) of whom Moro-oka Ichi-u spoke to me."

Musashi's conjecture was correct. The old priest was no other than Itō Yagorō Tomokage, the author of the one-sworded style, and hence known as Ittōsai. In his younger days he had searched the country through in vain in the hopes of finding an opponent more skilled than himself. Having made many enemies by his fencing, he thought that the best way of ending his days in peace was to enter the priesthood and retire to a secluded spot. But even here his fame was known to a few persons or Musashi would never have discovered his whereabouts.

To return to my story, Musashi, after leaving Ittōsai's house, went back to Echizen again, still in search of his foe. Not discovering any trace of him there, he pushed on to the province of Shinano. This province, as is well known to

tourists, is one of the most mountainous in the whole of Japan. Hither and thither Musashi wandered through various parts of the province till one day again he missed his way. He found himself winding through apparently endless mountain passes. He heard the flowing of water at a little distance from him and went in the direction of the sound to see whether by following the stream he could discover a path. On his way he met a man arrayed in the costume of a hunter: a bear-skin coat on his back, a bamboo hat on his head, a gun in his hand. Informing him that he had lost his way, Musashi begged that as it was very late he would kindly put him up for the night at his house.

To this the hunter consented, and conducted Musashi to his dwelling. On their arrival there Musashi was received by an old woman, who immediately served up some boiled millet for him, which, having been a long time without food, he was not long in demolishing. When Musashi had finished his meal, the hunter and the old woman took a hearty repast; after which the hunter excused himself on the plea that he had some business to transact, ordering the old woman to look well after his guest during his absence.

The old woman having prepared a bed for Musashi, urged him to retire to rest. "You must be done up, sir,

after the fatigues of the day," said she. "Please not to mind me but go to bed whenever you feel inclined."

"If you will excuse me then I don't know but what I will," replied Musashi, "for I have had a long day of it." Before retiring Musashi had a good look round the place; and it seemed to him that again he had become the guest of a robber. And as firearms seemed plentiful in the house, he thought it would never do for him to be off his guard. Anyhow, having been asked to go to bed, to avoid showing that he had any suspicion, he had better do so; but sleep he would not.

This house was, as Musashi had conjectured, the haunt of a gang of highwaymen. The heads of the gang were no other than two followers of Ganryū, Aoyama Mompei and Oshida Sakichi, of whom mention has been made several times already.* To them now the robber had gone. Despite his resolve to the contrary, Musashi dropped off into a doze, but a slight noise of persons moving in an adjoining room roused him to consciousness. The noise continued. It was caused by the footsteps of, in Musashi's opinion, some seven or eight men. "They will be plotting something or other," said he "I will listen to their conversation and will be ready for them."

Presently he heard them say:—"This fellow being a

* *Vide supra*, p. 256, *et passim*.

warrior-pilgrim, if he should wake up he'll be hard to deal with. Why not cut off his head as he lies there?"

"No, no," replied another; "that would never do; why, the place would be half full of blood. The fellow, you may depend upon it, has not much money with him, and the worth of his two swords would never make up for the things in the room that would be stained by his blood."

Some suggested one thing and some another; till at last Ganryū's two pupils came forward and Mompei said:—"You need not puzzle your heads nor alarm yourselves so much about this matter. Even though the devil were in the next room, we two should be equal to the task of binding him. I will go in and see what kind of a fellow he is."

Musashi heard all this, and just as Mompei was approaching his bed he gave a loud snore.

Mompei took a peep at the face of the visitor and, in a great state of alarm, instantly returned to his companions and said:—"Heavens! Here's a pretty business! We have got some one worse than the devil in the house. Why, 'tis no other than Miyamoto Musashi who sleeps in the next room. Some fifty of us might attack him—but all to no purpose. I tell you what, in my opinion, we shall do wisely to let this man alone. We'll give him his breakfast

in the morning and send him on his way. If we wish to save ourselves from broken crowns or something worse, depend on it, this will be our best course."

"Well, to be sure! What shall we hear next?" replied Sakichi. "The leader of a band of robbers talking in this weak manner! Granted that Musashi is a formidable fellow, are we not numerous? And what is more, are we not well supplied with firearms? The idea of allowing the foe of Sasaki Ganryū to escape now that we have him in our power!"

"Very good, then," said Mompei, "if such be your will, so let it be: get ready your guns, all of you!"

"'Tis come to this, is it," said Musashi. "Then it is time for me to clear out. But wait a moment: is there no means of defending myself against firearms?" In an instant his mind ran through a score of modes of defence, but they all seemed to him alike powerless against firearms. "No, nothing will stop a bullet," said he: "I must flee." Snatching a rain-coat and a rain-hat that hung on the walls close to his bed, and cutting a hole in the wall with his sword, he made his escape.

The robbers in the adjoining room, hearing the noise, exclaimed:—"He has escaped! he has escaped!" Quickly they lit their torches and followed him up. Musashi was a swift runner; but it was night, and he was entirely ignorant

of the best road to take. Consequently he had not proceeded far before he was overtaken by the robbers. He felt that his life could only be saved by a resort to stratagem. In an instant he thought of one : climbing up to a high rock, on its summit he stuck his sword, and by the aid of a few sticks made the skeleton of a figure, which he covered with the rain-hat and the rain-coat, and arranged it all so cleverly that in the darkness it looked exactly like a human figure. Then, crouching down near the form, but on a lower elevation, and so out of danger's way, he awaited the approach of his foes.

The robbers were not long in discovering what they took to be the object of their search. They gathered round the figure, and at a given signal all discharged their guns at it. It fell.

"He is killed," shouted Mompei and Sakichi as they rushed to the spot.

Springing from his lurking place Musashi cut down Mompei and killed him. Sakichi commenced to flee, but Musashi instantly overtook and seized him. Sakichi pleaded hard for his life.

"I don't know that there is anything to be gained by killing such a fellow as you," replied Musashi ; "so I will spare you, but only on the condition that you tell me where Ganryū is."

"I know nothing of Ganryū," replied Sakichi. "Since he killed Munisai I have lost sight of him."*

"Then you can go," said Musashi, taking him up and flinging him with great force to a distance of several feet—an ill-advised act on his part as will presently be seen. Musashi's absolute fearlessness made him neglect to take even ordinary precautions against the dangers that beset his path. That a pupil of Ganryū would, if left alive, become a source of danger in such a place as that in which Musashi now found himself a moment's reflection would have convinced any ordinary person. It was not long before Musashi found out his mistake. Sakichi blew a horn, gathered his scattered followers together, and gave directions that they should guard every path by which escape was possible. Their lighted torches soon convinced Musashi that he was surrounded on all sides by his foes and that none of the numerous mountain foot-paths could be made use of. But he was on an elevation, and the robbers were in the paths below; so one mode of escape was left open to him, and, hazardous as it was, he determined to attempt it. He climbed a tree and swung on its branches till he reached the bows of another, which he seized. By repeating this feat, he succeeded in passing from tree to tree very much as monkeys do. He crossed

* This was the first *positive* proof that Musashi had that Ganryū is his father's murderer.

several deep ravines in this way; and was soon far out of the reach of his enemies. He scrambled on over rocks and steep places until he thought there was no chance of any one's finding him, when he sat down under a tree to rest. Whilst here the day dawned. He arose, and, after walking a little, discovered a narrow path, by following which for a little time he reached a broader one, where he met a man who had none of the looks of a robber about him. To him Musashi related what had occurred, and asked for guidance and shelter.

"My master," replied the peasant, "is a man who holds no intercourse with the world, and therefore it is not allowable for me to take any one to his house."

"If that be the case, your refusal is reasonable enough," replied Musashi, "but all I ask is that you will kindly take me as far as the door of your master's house and announce my arrival to him. If he refuses to give me shelter, I will go elsewhere."

The man led Musashi as far as the entrance to the house, and then went ahead to inform his master of the arrival of a visitor.

Musashi was invited into the house, but told that his stay must be short. An aged man, with magnificent white hair, sitting by the fire-side, looked up as the stranger entered, and revealed a pair of eyes that seemed capable of piercing

through almost anything. Musashi, whose respect for old age was very great, saluted the host in a most reverent manner, and, after making a few casual remarks, proceeded to relate to him the story of his experiences on the previous evening. The old man listened with great attention. The animation which lit up his features and partly concealed the marks of age with which they were stamped showed that tales of exciting adventure acted as a charm on him.

After taking some refreshment, Musashi looked well around the house in which he found himself, and came to the conclusion that it was neither the haunt of a robber nor the dwelling of a peasant. His host was evidently a warrior, and as such doubtless knew something about fencing. So, with the object of seeing what he could do, Musashi requested him to give him a few lessons.

"The time was," replied the aged man, "when I paid attention to fencing. But there was such a fuss made about victory and defeat all over the country that I grew disgusted with the whole affair and came away to live in the woods here. As for fencing with a young man like you—this I have no inclination to do."

Musashi thought to himself:—"What this man says very much resembles what Ittōsai said. I wonder who he is."

"May I ask, sir, with whom I have the honour of staying?" asked Musashi.

"What is the use of an old man like me giving his name?" replied the host.

This only increased Musashi's suspicions, and he begged earnestly to be allowed to remain the night with his host; who, after many apologies for the poorness of the accommodation, consented.

During the evening the two conversed freely together. The old man was evidently more interested in fencing than anything else, and his remarks on the art fully convinced Musashi that he had the good luck to have again fallen in with one of the great fencing celebrities of the land. After they had talked a long time, the old man dropped off to sleep.

Musashi now commenced to chat with the servant. He found him too a most interesting companion and well versed in fencing matters. After talking to him some little time, "You seem very well up in the art," said Musashi, "suppose that you and I have a turn while the old gentleman is asleep."

"That would not do;" replied the servant. "He would soon wake up, and I should be found fault with for fencing with a visitor without his leave."

"Never mind that," replied Musashi. "I will excuse you to him and make it all right."

The servant agreed; and, having lit torches, the two

stole outside and commenced to fence. For a long time their contest was undecided. the servant fencing remarkably well, but at last he was struck by his opponent.

In the meanwhile, the noise of the swords had aroused the old man, who even in his sleep had a keen ear for such sounds, and he had stolen over to a spot where he could watch the contest. "Fine! fine!" he exclaimed when Musashi struck his opponent. He then praised Musashi and in the course of the conversation that ensued gave him some hopes that he himself would fence with him on the morrow.

The next day after breakfast Musashi again pressed his request. And his host, remarking that there was something very expert about the way that he handled his swords agreed to fence with him, but first wished to know why he used two swords. The old man was impressed by the account Musashi gave of the circumstances that led to the invention, and agreed to fence with him.

Musashi, in great glee, went out to the court-yard and, with his two swords in his hand, stood waiting for his opponent. But the latter did not make his appearance for some time. After a while, however, in a most lazy slouching way he came poking along on a pair of pattens. "Shall I fetch a sword?" asked Musashi.

"No need to do that," replied the old man. "Anything will do. Here's a pot-lid; it will serve my purpose

as well as anything. Thereupon the old man, after removing the lid as deliberately as possible, fumbled about putting the pot to rights, taking as long about everything as he well could. Musashi, thinking this to be an indication that his host despised his foe, began to grow very impatient and angry, and on the old man's approaching him, said:—"This is the first time that I have heard of a man's coming to fence with a pot-lid. A curiosity, indeed!"

"What stuff!" replied the old man, "fancy one who has invented a two-sworded-style entertaining such notions! What's the difference whether a spear, sword, halberd, stick or a pot-lid be used? The principle is the same. If you have any doubt about it, then, see how it acts."

Here they commenced to fence. No sooner did the fencing begin than the fire of youth lit up the old man's eyes: his bent and decrepit form assumed an erect and commanding attitude and he seemed in an instant to have grown twenty years younger. Look as he would, Musashi could see no unguarded spot of his opponent's body to strike. While he was considering what to do, the old man, with a shout that, it is said, had a most discouraging effect on his opponent, advanced towards him. For a moment, quite unconsciously Musashi retreated, but, recollecting himself, again renewed the contest. With his left sword he aimed a blow at the old man's head. This being warded

off, Musashi instantly made a cut at his side. This, too, was received: and, as the sword was being withdrawn, the old man delivered a sharp back-handed stroke on Musashi's arm, which caused him to drop his weapon. Musashi, now somewhat annoyed, commenced to slash furiously at the old man, but all to no purpose: the latter's agility, quickness of eye, and adroit handling of the pot-lid were perfectly marvellous. After a few vain attempts at self-defence, for with such an antagonist attack was out of the question, Musashi suddenly found himself on the ground. He was held down by the old man's lid so firmly that till the latter voluntarily released him he was unable to rise. When the pot-lid was removed Musashi sprang up, and was in hopes of catching his opponent off his guard and thrusting his sword into his side. But instead of this he was again knocked down, and this time his fall was so violent that he lost his senses. The contest over, the old man quietly walked into his room and sat down as composedly as if nothing had happened.

In a few minutes the servant came to him and asked:—"What is to be done with Musashi? He can't be left as he is or he may die."

"Let him alone," replied the old man; "he will come to directly: if not I will do something to bring him round." This a few minutes after he accomplished.



Musashi had no sooner recovered his senses than he approached the old fencer, and in a kneeling posture humbly begged his pardon for having been so presumptuous as to contend with such an expert swordsman. "Though I possess eyes, it was as though I had none," said he, "for I failed to see that I was in the presence of a superior man."

"No, no;" replied the old man, "no apology is needed. You are, I perceive, no ordinary fencer. When I was young I went around the country on a fencing tour, as you have been doing. There was a man with whom I fenced whose style was very much like yours. I remember that our contest was undecided. Dear me! how my memory fails: for the life of me I can't remember his name. In what part of the country were you born?"

On Musashi's stating from what province he had come and giving the name of his father, the old man exclaimed:—"To be sure! to be sure! Well, when I was young, Munisai's fame was very great, and I found that he was quite a match for me. I suppose he is an old man with grey hairs and a bald head like myself by this time: I have heard nothing of him for an age."

This remark touched a tender cord and awakened sad recollections in Musashi's mind. He at once related to the old man the story of his father's cruel murder.

"Who was the perpetrator of the foul deed?" asked the aged fencer.

"Though you are my teacher," replied Musashi, "such a matter, sir, as you are aware, is not one that may be disclosed to any but the most tried and trusted friend. I am practising fencing for the purpose of killing my father's murderer: but his name, sir,—excuse me—but—"

"Don't apologize further," said the old man. "You feel just as you ought on this point. But in order to assure you that I am worthy of your confidence, I will tell you who I am: I am no other than Tsukahara Bokuden."*

A thrill of delight passed through Musashi's soul as he listened to this disclosure. For Bokuden was the one man of all others whom he had for years been longing to meet. He had, as we have already mentioned, been informed that Bokuden could teach him something, and he felt that in view of Ganryū's being a fencer of note and of the certainty of his making use of every available means of increasing his proficiency, it was the solemn duty of the man who sought to slay him to qualify himself for the deadly conflict by placing himself under the instruction

* For an amusing incident connected with this fencer *vide* Appendix to Part I of this Life.

of the great masters of the art and by gaining a knowledge of the secrets of their superiority to other men.

Bokuden was born in the province of Hitachi ; being the second son of Tsukahara Tosa-no-Kami, a very noted fencer. Bokuden was not long in learning his father's style and subsequently went around the country on a fencing tour. After acquiring the good points of the styles of all the men with whom he fenced, he invented a new style known as the *Bokuden-ryū*, or the *Mu-te-kachi-ryū* (the "Handless-victory-style"). It obtained the latter name owing to its author's depending more on quickness of eye and keen perception of the intentions of an adversary than on any adroit handling of the sword. In making this remark I do not intend to imply that Bokuden did not handle his sword adroitly ; but where fencers are very equally matched superiority in one important particular often decides the contest in favour of one or the other. It was in great proficiency in reading the thoughts and intentions of his opponents that Bokuden excelled other men.* He tested his style by traversing the country in search of combatants. He failed to find a man who could defeat him anywhere ; and his superiority being acknowledged on all

* Hence Handless-victory must be taken in a somewhat restricted sense, signifying only that it was not on the quick movement of his hand that Bokuden chiefly depended for victory.

sides, he first became the instructor of Ashikaga Yoshiteru and subsequently of Ashikaga Yoshiaki. On the fall of the latter he retired into obscurity.

To resume my narrative, on hearing that the main purpose of Musashi's wanderings was the slaying of Ganryū, Bokuden promised to disclose to him the secret of his superiority to other fencers. "It would never do for you to encounter your foe and be overcome by him," said Bokuden, "and so I will intrust to you a secret that will make you victorious everywhere. The imparting of the knowledge whereby to enable you to slay his murderer is the offering that I make to the spirit of my deceased friend Munisai."

Musashi was highly delighted with this promise, and in consequence of it for the space of half a year remained with Bokuden, studying his style most diligently day by day.

The six months having expired, Bokuden informed Musashi that he had nothing more to teach him, and that he thought it high time that he went in search of his foe. Musashi's profound respect and ardent affection for Bokuden made him extremely sorry to have to take leave of him. He had found the old man not only a good fencer but a most pleasant companion : from him he had learnt a number of things about the politics of former days that were very interesting to him. Then Bokuden, like all noted fencers

those days, had during his pilgrimages met with all

kinds of adventures and had often been within an inch of losing his life owing to the treachery of defeated fencers: and, so, agreeable to that characteristic of old men—the love of retrospect—the veteran fencer would go over the exciting parts of his life again and again, and no matter how frequently a story was repeated, the memory of his deeds of daring never failed to fire his soul afresh and to give new animation to his features. But at last the pleasant intercourse had to be broken off, and our hero was obliged to resume those sterner duties which as an avenger of blood he had solemnly vowed not to leave unperformed.





CHAPTER IV.

On leaving Bokuden's house, Musashi directed his steps towards the Tōkaidō, *en route* to Shikoku. Having reached the crossing, he embarked in one of the ferry-boats which at that time ran across the Sea of Harima. After proceeding a little distance, a huge shark appeared above the water, and the sailors became too much alarmed to go further. On being informed what was the matter, Musashi sprang into the water and slew the fish,* and the vessel crossed over to Shikoku without anything further occurring.

Having searched the northern and central parts of Japan very thoroughly without success, Musashi was strongly of opinion that the foe whose life he sought must be concealing himself in some secluded part of the west. After visiting several of the provinces of Shikoku, he made his way to Sanuki, visiting a place called Takinomiya, situated in the Nanjo district, where there was a

* Though this incident sounds somewhat fictitious, there are recorded in Japanese annals other instances of sharks having been killed in a similar manner. Asaina Samurō, who flourished in the twelfth century of our era, is said to have killed a shark in the Sea of Sagami in the presence of one of the Kamakura Shōguns in the same way.

temple dedicated to Tenjin.* To this deified scholar Mushashi offered up his prayers.

Another worshipper was visiting the temple at the same time and he, like Musashi, had a definite request to make. He repeated his prayers aloud. Musashi listened with great interest as his fellow-worshipper, in a deeply earnest manner, poured forth his supplication as follows:—
“O thou all powerful Tenjin, with profound reverence I approach thee. I am one whose occupation is fencing. Day by day have I persevered in the study of the art. But there exists a man called Miyamoto Musashi, whose skill in swordsmanship is superior to mine. Him I cannot defeat. Nevertheless, being the slayer of my adopted father, he is my mortal foe. I beseech thee, O God, to strengthen me and teach me, and enable me to overcome my foe.”

* Sugawara Michizane was deified under this name. Michizane is one of the most popular of the national heroes, though his achievements were all of a peaceful nature. He was a court noble who flourished in the latter part of the ninth century. He was considered the greatest scholar and prose writer of his age; for which reason he is now regarded as the patron of learning and more especially of calligraphy, an art always held in high esteem in Japan. He died in exile in Kyūshū A.D. 903, and a recumbent image of a cow frequently adorns the temples where he is worshipped, as he was in the habit of riding about on a cow in the land of his exile. Since the plum was his favourite tree, plum trees are often to be seen in the grounds of temples dedicated to his honour.

The lips from which these words proceeded were no other than those of Arima Kihei, who, after his defeat in Kyōto* had shut up his school and retired to his native province (Sanuki), where, week after week and month after month, he had been practising on the forks of trees with a view of finding out some way of breaking through the crossed swords of Musashi. In cleaving these forks in two he had become very skilled, and was just thinking that he would be a match for Musashi.

Musashi admired the spirit that actuated Kihei and at once made himself known to him. "You are Kihei, if I am not mistaken," said he. "I am Miyamoto Musashi, I have been listening to your prayer and have been very much struck with its tone. The spirit that it displays is most admirable."

"Ah, a rare thing, indeed, to meet you here, Miyamoto!" replied Kihei. "Pray do not think that, on account of my defeat at Kyōto, I bear any malice in my heart against you. Such is not the case. But, as you know, my duty to my adopted parent requires that I should avenge his death. Therefore it is that I have been asking for strength and skill to slay you. As my feelings on this point are just as they should be, I beg

* *Vide supra*, p. 261.

that you will afford me an opportunity of fencing with you."

"Certainly;" replied Musashi, "and at once."

They both instantly drew their swords and commenced. Musashi, profiting by the instruction that he had received from Bokuden, held his swords somewhat differently from what he had previously done, and Kihei for a while saw no exposed part to strike. But, after a while, Musashi presented his crossed swords to his opponent, which was a signal for Kihei to deal one of the tremendous blows that for months he had been dealing at the forks of trees. It was so effectual that Musashi's left-hand sword was severed in two. Musashi, seeing this, darted on one side, and the resisting force being thus suddenly removed, Kihei was thrown violently to the ground. Had he desired it, Musashi might have killed him there and then. But this he never dreamt of doing.

"Kihei, Kihei! what is the matter? what is the matter?" exclaimed Musashi.

For a while Kihei neither moved nor spoke, but presently he arose and quietly sheathed his weapon.

"Why don't you fight again?" asked Musashi. "What ails you?"

"I looked upon you as my enemy," replied Kihei; "but I can no longer view you as such. Your forbearing to slay me as I lay on the ground, your asking,

‘what ails you?’—this has taken away all the enmity I bore to you. Despite the fact that you were the slayer of my adopted parent, I cannot find it in my heart to fight with you. I have often heard of enmity being requited by kindness, but have never had such a practical proof that this is possible as you have given me to-day. Knights such as you are rare, Sir. My adopted father was, as you know, a worthless man, ignorant, bombastic and licentious, with no such noble feelings as those which actuate you. As the custom of slaying the murderer of one’s parent is so universally observed among us, I thought it incumbent on me to attempt to kill you. I have broken one of the swords that formed a part of that, until now, invincible cross of yours. With this I am content: and with this the spirit of my deceased parent will have to be content too. Will you not henceforth make a friend of me and assist me to get on in life?”

“That I will, and gladly,” replied Musashi.

The two fencers went to a neighbouring tavern and cemented their brotherhood with a cup of *sake*, agreeable to immemorial custom. While here, Kihei said:—“Since we have become brothers, what do you say to our exchanging some article by way of strengthening the bond of friendship between us? Suppose now that you give me your sword, the one that I broke, and I give you the

one with which I broke it. I should like to take the broken sword and present it at the tomb of my adopted father as a trophy : so shall I fulfil my duty to his departed spirit."

"Good ! good !" replied Musashi. "So let it be."

They exchanged swords and, after conversing further, separated, Kihei setting out for Himeji, where his father's tomb was, and Musashi making for Chūgoku.

My tale returns to Sasaki Ganryū. We left him outside the castle-town of Himeji bidding farewell to the two disciples of whom we have heard since. From thence he made his way to the province of Hida, where he retired to the mountains and for three years practised all kinds of tricks and rapid movements of his limbs. "That Musashi is a most extraordinary fellow ;" said he to himself, "and nothing struck me more than the rapidity with which he darted about : there was no knowing where to find him. In this art I will perfect myself, so that in case I run against him, or, as is more likely, he runs against me, I shall be ready for him." The three years having passed, Ganryū set out for Echizen, with a view, if possible, of getting into the employ of some baron residing in that province. But not knowing a soul in that part of the country, and no opportunity of bringing himself into notice by the performance of some brave exploit occur-

ring, he failed to find an opening there. After having determined to leave the province, one day, while strolling leisurely along, his mind still bent on the one purpose of his life—the qualifying himself for the great contest which he knew must sooner or later take place—a number of swallows flying to and fro attracted his attention. The rapidity with which they turned struck him as something very wonderful, and he said to himself:—"Is there no possibility of imitating the rapid movements of these birds?" He tried all sorts of ways, and at last invented what was known as the *tsubame-gayeshi*, or "swallow-somersault." Having added this accomplishment to his many others, Ganryū felt little anxiety about encountering his foe. Not meeting with any one in Echizen willing to employ him, he proceeded to Kyōto. Before reaching the capital, remembering the circumstances under which he had left it some years previously,* he thought it advisable to change his name. He assumed the name of Kandyū as a substitute for Ganryū.

He was not successful in obtaining a position anywhere in the vicinity of the capital, so he set out for Kyūshū. Having entered the province of Buzen, he was about to ascend the Adachi hills, when he noticed a large number of people assembled at a little distance who seemed

* *Vide supra*, Pt. I, p. 211, *et seq.*

excited about something. One of them, approaching him, said:—"Please, Sir, not to go any further. To-day the baron is hunting in yonder hills, and the woods are full of men armed with guns. We have orders not to allow any one to pass."

"Thanks for the information," replied Kandayū; "but I am on important business and cannot stop. I know you cannot give me permission to pass, but I shall be obliged by your allowing me to pass under the rose."

"But you will put your life in jeopardy."

"Never mind that."

"Well, then, if you don't object to be killed, pass on."

Kandayū proceeded and ascended the hill. He heard guns going off on all sides, and presently saw a huge wild boar coming down the path in which he was walking. He had previously spied the baron's tent, surrounded with armed men, at a little distance off. To tell the truth, his object in ascending the hills while the shooting was going on, was to bring himself into notice by performing some feat of valour in the presence of the baron or of some of his chief retainers. The sudden appearance of the boar afforded him the opportunity he sought. Being a man of prodigious strength and undaunted courage, he determined to attack the animal, despite the fact that it was mad with the pain caused by two or three bullet

wounds; and, as to have used his sword would have rendered the feat less remarkable, with nothing but an iron fan in his hand he encountered the animal, and after a desperate struggle succeeded in killing it.*

The baron whose patronage Kandayū was seeking was no other than Kuroda Nagamasa, Kai-no-Kami. He commanded his retainers to call the man who had performed this brave exploit. On Kandayū's informing Nagamasa that he was a fencer, he was immediately asked what style he practised.

"I practise," replied Kandayū, "a style of my own invention known as the *Sasaki-ryū*. Its merits, my Lord, almost defy description. If you can imagine a combination of the prowess, the speed, the determination of the tiger with all the miraculous powers of the dragon, you will have some idea of what my style is like."

* It must be borne in mind that these fans were quite formidable weapons, those used by fencers often being of considerable weight. Numerous instances of death being caused by a blow from a fan are given in authentic histories. The origin of the use of fans as weapons is a peculiar one. They are said to have been invented as a protection against the foul play sometimes resorted to during visits of ceremony. It occasionally happened that when a knight was paying his respects to a baron, while kneeling in the veranda of the baron's sitting-room, the sliding-doors were suddenly closed and the knight's head secured between the doors. To prevent the closing of the doors at such times, and to provide a weapon of defence on occasions when swords were not allowed to be worn, the iron fan was invented and it saved many a man's life.

"Have you ever been defeated in fencing?" asked the baron.

"Never;" replied Kandayū. "For over ten years I have been travelling around the country seeking for a man who could teach me something, but have failed to find one."

After presenting three gold coins to Kandayū, Nagamasa told him that he might take up his quarters in Kokura, pending further communication from him.

A few days after this event a messenger arrived at the house where Kandayū was staying to inform him that the baron did not feel disposed to take him into his employ, but that he would grant him an income of two hundred bags of rice *per annum* and allow him to open a fencing school in Kokura.

The reason for Nagamasa's thus acting was that he judged by Kandayū's boastful manner that were he employed he would be the cause of trouble.

Kandayū was far from pleased with the offer, but he thought it better to accept it than to wander about the country doing nothing, so he settled down in Kokura. Being more skilled in fencing than any one in the neighbourhood, his fame spread far and wide.

In the meantime, Musashi had determined to leave Chūgoku and proceed to Kyūshū. While carrying out this

resolution, he was crossing the Iwakuni mountain, one day, when suddenly somebody walking behind him seized one of his swords and pulled it back. Not knowing what was meant by this piece of rudeness, Musashi thought of killing its perpetrator; but, on second thoughts, decided that it would be beneath him to notice the affair; so, quickly withdrawing his sword from the man's hand, he went on. But presently a voice from behind called out,—“Wait a minute! wait a minute.”

“Who are you that dares to stop a traveller in this way? What do you mean by this strange proceeding?” asked Musashi.

“Excuse me, Sir,” replied the man. “I saw as you passed that you were a swordsman whom no one dare insult. Struck by the superiority of your gait, I felt a desire to know your name. I am Sekiguchi Yazaemon, an expert in sleight. I am now on a pilgrimage with the object of perfecting my art.”

“I am very glad to meet you,” replied Musashi. “Of course your name has been familiar to me for a long time. I am a fencer: my name is Miyamoto Musashi.”

After they had proceeded a little distance, they agreed to put up at the same inn for the night. In the course of conversation, Yazaemon remarked:—“Some time ago I went to Kokura, in the province of Buzen, and there

fenced with a man called Sasaki Kandayū. Though I won the match, I must admit that Kandayū is a very skilful fencer. But he is a great hypocrite. In him flattery and bitter enmity are combined to a degree that I have never seen in anybody else. It does not do to be off your guard with him for an instant.* He asked me to stop the night with him; and I did so. But I felt as though I were sleeping on needles the whole night long, knowing that Kandayū is one of those men that cannot endure defeat."

In an instant Musashi's face beamed with excitement and, drawing close to Yazaemon, in an undertone he asked:—"How old was this fencer? and, judging by his speech, from what province would you say he was?"

"He is about forty years of age," replied Yazaemon, "and his dialect is that of one of the eastern provinces."

Musashi now inquired minutely about Kandayū's general appearance, his crest, &c; and, after hearing all that Yazaemon said in reply, was thoroughly convinced in his own mind that Kandayū was no other than the man for whom he had been searching so many long years.

* During the evening that Yazaemon spent with Kandayū, while the two were taking a meal together, the latter threw several daggers at his guest with the intention of killing him. When the daggers were skilfully warded off by Yazaemon, Kandayū pretended that he had thrown them in joke, to see how adroitly they would be turned aside by his guest.

Yazaemon could not but notice how excited Musashi had become, and asked :—" Why are you so anxious to find out the history of this man? Do you know him? "

Instantly quieting his feelings, with a careless air, Musashi replied :—" Oh, nothing particular! Being a fencer myself, you know, I was thinking that I should like to go and give this fellow a good drubbing and prevent his using his hands or feet for a long time to come."

Musashi felt very much inclined to start for Kokura that very night, but not having disclosed his purpose to Yazaemon, he deemed this indiscreet. So he waited anxiously till the morning and then set out.

Sekiguchi Yazaemon was originally from Ōmi. He was one of the most famous masters of sleight* of his time. It is related that one day while watching a cat fall from a roof, and observing how it turned over and over and came down on its feet, he thought that it would be worth while trying to imitate this accomplishment. He practised it from that time forward until it was said that he always fell on his feet from whatever height. He invented a style of sleight, known as the *Sekiguchi-ryū*. Subsequent to his meeting with Musashi, Yazaemon was employed by Tokugawa Yorinobu, Lord of Kii, down to the close of his life.

* 柔術, jūjutsu. *Vide supra*, Part I, p. 169, *et seq.*

On Musashi's arrival at Kokura, he put up at an inn kept by one Tomoeya Gorobei. On the evening of his arrival, it being the middle of August at the time, he went out for a stroll in the back yard of the inn to cool himself. Hearing a noise of some one hammering away at a tree not far off, he went to see what it was, and found a young man practising sword exercise by dealing heavy blows at a tree with a fencing sword.

"Good, good!" said Musashi.

"Who may you be that bestows his praises on me?" asked the youth.

"A guest at your father's inn," replied Musashi. "From whom have you been learning fencing?"

"From the most celebrated fencer in the whole of Japan," replied the young man. "His name is Sasaki Kandyū."

"Ah! I should like to fence with your teacher," replied Musashi. "Will you not introduce me to him?"

"It would be of little use your attempting such a thing," replied the young man. "Of late scores of noted fencers have visited my teacher but, with one exception, they have all been defeated. The exception was Sekiguchi Yazaemon. The match between him and my teacher was a drawn one. You may be a very good fencer, Sir, but you are not equal to acting as the opponent of Sasaki Kandyū."

Here a voice interposed from behind :—" Daijirō, hold your tongue : you are a rude fellow ! What do you know about who is first or who last in fencing ? "

The voice was that of Daijirō's father, Gorobei, who, turning to Musashi, said :—" My son has been speaking very impolitely to you, Sir, please pardon his rudeness. If you will come into the house there is something that I wish to say to you about Kandayū."

The two entered the inn together. And Gorobei, after ordering tea, sat down and commenced as follows :—" In reference to your fencing with Kandayū, Sir, if you will take my advice, you will refrain from doing so. I do not say this because I fear your being defeated by him. Of course, Sir, I know nothing of your abilities as a fencer and therefore cannot possibly say whether you are his equal or not. My reason for dissuading you from fencing with him is on account of his character as a man. He is a sour-tempered, mean-spirited fellow that will not brook a defeat."

" But still, replied Musashi, " since I am on a fencing tour with the express object of testing the powers of every fencer of any note in the country as compared with my own, were I to leave Kokura without fencing with Kandayū, it would be a blot on my fame as a fencer that I could not easily efface."

"Your desire to fence with him," replied Gorobei, "is a very natural one, but nevertheless I have a special reason for trying to induce you to desist; which, with your leave, I will now proceed to state. I was born in Hiroshima, Aki. My name originally was Kyūsuke;* my occupation that of a vegetable vendor. For some time I served Yoshioka Munisai, and was with him when he went to Himeji and fought with Ganryū. Who it was that killed Munisai I don't know for a certainty, but I have a strong suspicion that it was Ganryū, for I know of no one else who would be likely to make an enemy of a man like Yoshioka. This Kandayū, I must inform you, Sir, is no other than Ganryū himself." "Well, Sir, Munisai had two sons whose duty it was to avenge their father's death. The elder of the two, however, was in bad health when his father was killed. He asked for permission to slay his father's murderer, but, owing to his state of health at the time, it was refused. This preyed on his mind and he committed suicide. The younger brother was sent to Kumamoto; and what has become of him since I do not know. I have often thought that I should like to avenge my master's death myself, but not being a warrior, it seemed an impossibility. Since Yoshioka met with his death on

* This and many other parts of the story are of course largely fictitious.

my account, however, I could no longer bear to live in Hiroshima where the sad event took place; so, having a few acquaintances in this place, I took up my quarters here. My reason for sending my son to learn fencing from Kandayū, is to enable him to kill or to assist some one else to kill my master's foe. Thus I hope to do something to atone for the piece of folly* that cost my master his life."

Musashi was no longer able to contain himself. "And you are actually Kyūsuke, then?" he exclaimed. "Though a tradesman, you have the courage and integrity of a noble knight." Then, lowering his voice, he continued:—"I am no other than the Shichinosuke who was sent to Kumamoto. That my father was killed by Ganryū I know for a certainty, from a casual remark made by one of the latter's disciples, Oshida Sakichi, to me; and by conversation with Yazacmon I found out that Ganryū was in this place. This is the first that I have heard of my brother's death. Poor fellow! he was always sickly, but the shock to his nerves caused by the news of father's death doubtless hastened his end, and so this villain Ganryū may be said to be the slayer of my brother as well as of my father."

Gorobei, delighted with the news, replied:—"To-

* *Vide supra*, Pt. I, p. 217 *et seq.*

morrow, then, we will make arrangements for your encountering Ganryū."

Musashi, too excited to sleep that night, watched anxiously for the dawn of day. At daylight he aroused Gorobei and at once consulted with him as to the best way of bringing about a meeting between himself and Ganryū. Gorobei took all kinds of precautions to prevent Ganryū's escape from the town: he bribed guards and officials right and left for this purpose.

After much consultation the plan agreed to and carried out was as follows: Musashi and Daijirō went to Kandayū's fencing school. Daijirō entered the school as usual, asking Musashi to remain outside. After going through the ordinary morning salutations, Daijirō said:—"A distant relation of my father's has arrived at our house, and, hearing from me of your fame, has expressed a wish to receive instruction from you. He is now waiting outside. May I invite him to come in?"

"Certainly," said Kandayū, "a praiseworthy young fellow no doubt, wishing to make the best of his time whilst here!"

Daijirō went out and conducted Musashi into the fencing yard. The two fencers recognised each other instantaneously. Ganryū quailed before his foe, but not wishing his disciples to see this, restrained himself, and

waited for Musashi to address him. Musashi commenced thus:—"Sasaki Ganryū! It is a long time since we met. You are he, who, many years ago, under cover of night, assassinated my father at the Imado dike near Hiroshima. Of this I am positive, having heard it from the lips of your pupil Oshida Sakichi. I have long been in quest of you, but until now all my efforts to find you have been baffled. At last I am rewarded with a sight of the man who is my mortal foe—who may not be allowed to live under the same sky as myself. Come, and fight like a man!"

With a forced smile on his face, Ganryū replied:—"Well, people say strange things, indeed! Yoshioka Munisai was a man who treated me like a child—who said all he could to provoke me. I bore it a long time, but as he persisted in insulting me, I was obliged to kill him. Are you not from Higo? And was not Mnnisai from Aki? What then have you to do with avenging his death?"

"Stuff and nonsense?" replied Musashi, "though I went to Kumamoto when a lad of twelve, your foul deed was reported to me there, and I received permission from my lord, Katō Kiyomasa, to slay you. What's the use of shilly-shallying and beating about the bush in this way? Come let's set to at once."

Ganryū's disciples now came forward and, drawing their swords, said to their master:—"There is nothing to be afraid of in this fellow, teacher: we will attack him and kill him. Even the author of the 'Two sworded-style' will never prove a match for all of us."

Kandayū, raising his voice, replied:—"I admire your devotion to me; but you forget that it would ill-become one who too is the author of a style of fencing to allow it to be said that he was afraid to encounter Musashi alone but depended on his pupils for help." Then, turning to Musashi, he said:—"Since you are determined to look on me as an enemy, we will fight; but, being in the employ of a baron, I shall have to obtain permission from him first."

"Nobly spoken!" returned Musashi. "Now you speak as becomes a man who is the author of a style of fencing. I too am not my own master: I shall need to send in a petition at the same time as yourself." *

* *Vide supra*, Pt. I., p. 220; foot-note.



CHAPTER V.

The two fencers sent in their petitions. Nagamasa, on receiving them, said :—"This is a weighty affair ; and the more so as one of the would-be combatants is the retainer of no less a personage than Lord Katō of Higo." Having satisfied himself that Musashi's reasons for looking upon Ganryū as his foe were valid, Nagamasa gave the required permission : but took the precaution of strictly forbidding any attempt to assist either of the combatants. The men selected to superintend the necessary arrangements were his most trusted retainers, and the place chosen for the conflict was determined on with the object of preventing any interference. It was fixed that it should take place on a small island known as Nadajima.* This island is about a mile from the shore and only about half a mile in circumference. The day fixed for the match was the eighteenth day of the eight month of the fourth year of Keicho [A. D. 1599]. From the time that permission was given to hold the duel till the appointed day, the two men were closely guarded, not being allowed to leave their houses.

* Since often called Ganryū-jima.

The two fencers had spent a decade of years in preparing for this eventful day. Month by month they had each been improving their styles. Musashi had received the benefit of instruction from the two most noted adepts in the art of fencing that the country contained at the time. Ganryū, on the other hand, had been more incessantly engaged in practising and testing his style at the fencing schools which he had opened than Musashi's wandering life admitted of his doing. The two men hated each other with a deadly hatred which was intensified by the antipathies of their natures. In the duel that was about to take place there were to be arrayed, on the one side perfidy, pomposity, cruelty and utter callousness to most of the nobler feelings of human nature ; on the other, honesty, humility, benevolence, and a rare mental and moral refinement. But notwithstanding this, the trial was one of skill and not of moral qualities. It was an ancient, but a long since exploded, notion that elements of virtue or vice affect such contests. The pages of history abound with instances in which skilled vice has been triumphant and unskilled virtue has been defeated, so that the rule is well established that the battle is neither to the strong, the brave, nor the virtuous, but to the expert. That the presence or absence of moral good in the combatants influences such conflicts is a pleasing but superstitious idea

which, despite its having been immortalized by the eloquence with which Shakespeare and others have expressed it, is now no longer seriously entertained by any but the most unenlightened and ill-informed.

The news of what was about to take place spread far and wide. People all felt that the meeting of two such noted fencers in mortal combat was an event that would not happen twice in a lifetime, and so at daylight on the appointed day they flocked to Nadajima in such numbers that the sea was black with boats. A large number of constables had been previously despatched to the island: and not without reason, for not long after their arrival there they were informed that some twenty or thirty of Ganryū's disciples had determined to assist their master, and with this intention had resolved to surround the fencing ring. The constables peremptorily forbade any one but Government-officers landing on the island. They galloped their horses hither and thither shouting:—"He who lands, lands at his peril! We have orders to cut down any man who sets foot on the island." Thus Ganryū's disciples were defeated in their designs.

At the sound of the drum the two combatants entered the ring: Ganryū from the western side, and Musashi from the eastern. After the two had saluted each other, an officer produced a white tray, on which were two un-

glazed earthenware plates. The plates contained a little soft-boiled rice. By the side of them stood a small kettle, which in former days contained *sake*, but which on the present occasion was filled with water. The same tray contained a small quantity of salt. On the tray being placed between the combatants, they each took a little salt, deliberately placed it on the rice; after eating which they drank a little water. Then, after simultaneously dashing the earthenware plates to the ground and smashing them to bits, they placed themselves in a fencing attitude.

Before the fight began, Musashi thus addressed his foe:—"Ganryū, the murderer of my father! I am here to call you to account for your crime. The same world may no longer contain us both. We are here to-day to see which of us is the better man."

To which Ganryū replied:—"Grand words, indeed! But, however, you are no doubt actuated by a proper motive. In order to gratify you I might allow you to kill me,—but this is rather more than you can expect."

"You need not multiply words; I have heard enough. Come let's to it," replied Musashi, drawing his swords.

The fight commenced: but with two such wary fencers at first there was little done but keen fierce scrutiny of the movements of each other's weapons. After eyeing each other for a few minutes, Ganryū aimed a

blow at Musashi's head, this was received on the latter's crossed swords, and for a while the two men stood quite still; Ganryū being well aware that if he withdrew his sword he would give Musashi an advantage over him. But Musashi saw no use in maintaining this attitude long; so, removing his upper sword, with it he aimed a blow at Ganryū's head, which was instantly received. To this there succeeded a variety of flourishes and feints, sundry advances and retreats, cuts and guards, the both men acting with the greatest coolness and caution. This continued for about an hour, when the combatants being somewhat fatigued, a drum sounded, and officers came and separated them by placing a long pole between them. They each drank a little water, and doctors were called to attend to sundry scratches received in the fight.

During the interval Musashi said to himself:—"This fellow has improved in his fencing immensely since I last fenced with him. I have been treating him with too much contempt. I did not deem it necessary to resort to the use of the secrets which I learnt from Bokuden, but I perceive that unless I do so, I shall not win."

Consequently on the renewal of the contest Musashi, retreating to the further end of the ring, approached Ganryū with flourishes of his sword and gestures such as the latter had never witnessed. The effect of this new

move is said to have exercised a most mysterious influence over Ganryū, causing him to retreat as Musashi advanced. When near the edge of the ring Musashi dealt a blow at Ganryū's head. Ganryū, too, it should be mentioned, had made up his mind to make use of the art on the knowledge of which he specially prided himself. So, now, avoiding the stroke aimed at his head by dodging on one side, he instantly took a somersault* in the air and aimed a cut at Musashi's legs as he descended. The performance was new to Musashi, and hence not unattended with danger. His quick eye, however, saw the sword coming, and in an instant he leapt high into the air; but even then a good piece of his loose trousers was cut off, so that he was within an inch or two of losing one of his legs. The battle continued: but Ganryū was disheartened by the failure of the trick on which he had set so much value. With men equally matched in any kind of conflict even a slight depression of spirits in one of the combatants gives his adversary an advantage over him. This is eminently the case in fencing, where so much depends on high spirits. The failure of his somersault and the novelty and peculiarity of Musashi's new movements had produced loss of spirits in Ganryū. This was the embryo, as it were, of his defeat. The relaxation of his attention

* The *tsubame-gaeshi*: the swallow-somersault.

soon revealed itself in his failing to ward off a slashing stroke dealt at his forehead by Musashi with his left-hand sword. The gash inflicted brought the blood streaming into his eyes and prevented his seeing distinctly what his adversary was doing. Subsequent to this, with such a foe as Musashi, the end could not be long delayed. Ganryū did his best up to the last, but presently he received a cut extending from the shoulder to the centre of the breast, and fell, never more to rise.

Agreeable to ancient custom, Musashi stood across the body of his fallen foe and, as he thrust his sword through Ganryū's throat, said :—“ Witness, O spirit of Munisai, that I have slain your murderer !” Then deliberately cutting off Ganryū's head, he took it to the officials in charge, and said :—“ I beg that you will grant me permission to take this head to the tomb of my deceased parent.” The request was granted.

Musashi was summoned to Lord Kuroda's presence and congratulated on his success. This baron despatched messengers to Kumamoto to inform Lord Katō of what had occurred, and Buzaemon was immediately sent to Kokura to thank Nagamasa for the kindness shown to Kiyomasa's retainer.

Musashi now lost no time in conveying Ganryū's head to his father's tomb, which was, it will be remembered,

situated in Hiroshima. There he had an interview with Lord Mōri, who urged him to settle in his dominions. Musashi respectfully declined his offer and returned to Kumamoto, where he was constantly in the company of Lord Katō, to whom he related the many interesting experiences of his life.

Kihei subsequently found him out, and received a position under Lord Katō, with an income of three hundred *koku* a year.

Musashi taught fencing in Kumamoto for many years, remaining there till Buzaemon's death. After this event, bequeathing the property that he had received from Buzaemon to one of Kihei's children whom he had adopted, he set out on another pilgrimage.

There is no record of our hero's adventures on this his last journey. He returned to Kumamoto at the age of sixty-one, and there died, worn out with the many privations and hardships of his life.*

On the road that leads from Kumamoto to the province of Bungo, about six miles from Kumamoto, there is a tomb called "Musashi's tomb." The tombstone faces the hedge. The stone is said to have been turned towards the hedge owing to a report that certain farmers

* The date of his death was May 19th., 1645, but as to the length of his life authorities disagree, some affirming that he died at the age of 94.

had received punishment from the offended spirit of Musashi for tying up their horses near or for resting their burdens on the tombstone. But Musashi was not buried at this place. His remains lie in Kumamoto, in the Hommyōji Cemetery.

It is recorded that in addition to being an accomplished soldier Musashi was a man of considerable literary and artistic taste, that he wrote good verses and painted well. Some of his paintings are still extant, representing a dragon ascending to the sky on a cloud. Being known by their bearing the *nom de plume* of 二天, *Ni Ten*. His wandering life must have prevented his giving any very close attention to books. Moreover, his intense love of excitement and wild adventure would have the tendency of rendering much of the literature of those days unbearably prosy to him. The cultivation and refinement which in modern days are acquired by wide reading, however, he obtained by means of close intercourse with some of the noblest spirits of one of the noblest ages of Japanese history. Though of course a product of the age in which he lived, in many respects both as a warrior and as a man Musashi had few if any superiors among contemporaries whose lives are known to us. His amiableness, generosity, unselfishness, indomitable perseverance and humility made him beloved as a man, and

his extraordinary adroitness as a fencer created a name for him unsurpassed by any of his predecessors or successors. Despite the narrowness of its outlook, such a life as the one whose history I now close, in that it displays so many of the nobler aspects of human nature, is calculated to inspire confidence in humanity: and, allowing for the modifications which the spirit of the present age must necessarily put on them, such lives, in that they are permeated with an ideal—in that they have some great object in view for the realization of which every nerve is strained, are the great desiderata of modern times. The singleness of aim, the steadfastness of purpose, the untiring exertion of Miyamoto Musashi would make its mark anywhere.



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JAPAN IN DAYS OF YORE.

V.

A DEEP-LAID PLOT AND HOW IT WAS DISCOVERED.

CHAPTER I.

SOME twelve years before Tokugawa Yoshimune assumed the title of Shōgun [became Shōgun 1716 A.D.], while he was still in Kii, it happened that one of his concubines called Sawano, being about to give birth to a child, was sent off to her mother, who lived in the village of Hirasawa to be confined there. With her Yoshimune sent a letter, a sword, and fifty *ryō* in money—of the two former articles more anon.

When Sawano reached her home she found no one but her mother there. Not long after her arrival she gave birth to a son. But the mother and the child both died. They were buried in the cemetery attached to a temple known as the Kōdenji, and Sawano's aged mother was left to bemoan their loss. She carefully laid by the things sent by the Shōgun, reckoning them the greatest treasures she possessed.

In Hirasawa there was another temple called the Kwan-ō-in; attached to which was a student named Hōtaku. Sawano's mother used to do the washing for this temple, so she knew the youth very well.

One day, about eleven years after the death of Sawano, Hōtaku had occasion to go to the old woman's house on some business. She treated him very hospitably, bringing out some dumplings for him, and while he was eating them chatted with him in a most friendly manner. "How old are you?" asked the old woman.

"Eleven," replied Hōtaku.

"Just the age that my grandson would have been had he lived," replied the old woman. "In that case, how different would have been my position! I should not have been working for my living as I am now."

"It is no use your speaking in this way," replied Hōtaku, "to persons who know nothing about the matter. People will think you crazy if you talk so grandly."

"I am not deceiving you," replied the old woman. "You have been studying at the temple, so of course you can read. I will show you something that will prove to you that I should have been in very different circumstances had my grandchild lived."

Here she handed to Hōtaku a letter which had the



Shōgun's seal on it, and the purport of which was, that if Sawano gave birth to a son, the said son should be exalted to rank and position and have all the privileges of a member of the TOKUGAWA family conferred upon him.

"There is no mistake about what you say," said Hōtaku; "but I advise you not to be showing this document to everybody that comes along, for fear it may get you into trouble. You had better keep this matter to yourself."

As he said this, the thought crossed Hōtaku's mind that if he could steal the document and the sword, he could by this means pass himself off as the Shōgun's son without any difficulty; for who was to know that Sawano's son was dead? * Here was a chance; and he was not the one to miss it. Hōtaku went back to the temple full of the subject. That night visions of wealth, rank and pomp flitted before him; and he awoke the next morning fully determined to take the first opportunity of acting on the resolution he had made.

* It seems to us to-day quite incredible that the death of Yoshimune's concubine and her son should not have been reported to the father of the child. But the news may have been sent in the form of an oral message and hence in later years the Shōgun may have felt that the death was wrongly reported and that consequently Ten-ichi-bō was his real son. It is only by some such surmise that we can explain the persistency of Yoshimune in crediting the title which Ten-ichi-bō claimed to be his by right of birth.

Not many days after, Hōtaku had occasion to go with the rector of his temple to a medicine shop. There, while the priest was performing a religious service, the lad amused himself by looking over the medicines. A large jar on the shelf attracted his attention. "What medicine may this be?" inquired Hōtaku of a man who was in the shop.

"It is called *Hammyō Shiseki*" said the man. "It is rank poison." Some of this Hōtaku stole while the shopman was engaged elsewhere.

Hōtaku waited his time, and, one night, when it was snowing hard, he went to the house of Sawano's mother, and, after thanking her for her kindness to him in the past produced some *sake* and induced the old woman to take enough to make her quite tipsy; and then, when she was asleep, strangled her. Dragging the corpse over to the hearth, he placed the face in the fire, so as to make it look as though the old woman had fallen into it; and round the hearth he placed wine cups, making it appear as though the deceased had drunk herself tipsy and then in a state of unconsciousness had burnt herself to death. He then took the document, the sword and what money there was in the house and went away.

The neighbours came in the next day, and, seeing

how things were, did not suspect foul play. "It was evident," they said, "that the old woman had burnt herself to death whilst tipsy."

Hōtaku thought to himself:—"It will never do to leave any one alive who knows me well, or my identity will be discovered. So I must kill the priest with whom I am living."

This he accomplished by putting some of the poison that he had stolen from the apothecary into the priest's rice.

So the old priest died, no one knowing how or why. The only thing that was conjectured was, that some food he had taken had disagreed with him, no uncommon occurrence in those days of ignorance of the properties of herbs. Probabilities go for much in such cases. And no one thought it likely that a student priest would kill his teacher and benefactor.

The next thing which Hōtaku did was to represent to the villagers that, since his priest was dead, it would be necessary for him to continue his studies elsewhere:—"I am too young and inexperienced to take charge of the temple," said he; "therefore, with your leave, I will go away to some other place, and when I have completed my studies, I will return and be your pastor."

The people were all much struck with the thoughtfulness and the zeal of the young priest. They collected

money for him, and gave him presents of various kinds; and, on hearing that he was going to start on the following day, said they would come and see him off.

"You need not do this," replied Hōtaku:—"A pilgrim-priest, you know, is one who must inure himself to trial, so it is better that I should go away alone."

The next morning, Hōtaku rose very early and went down to the sea-shore. Here he saw a dog wandering about in search of food. With a little rice he tempted the animal to approach him, and then killed it with a sword. Taking the animal's blood, he bespattered his clothes with it, and having cut holes in them to make it appear as though they had been pierced with a sword, he threw the dead carcase of the dog into the sea and went off in the opposite direction to that which he had told the people he should take.

The villagers discovered the clothes and immediately concluded that some robber had heard of the money that Hōtaku had received from them and for its sake had killed the lad and cast his body into the sea. The clothes and other articles that belonged to him found on the beach were, by order of the district officer, collected and carefully preserved.

Hōtaku assumed the garb of a pilgrim and gave out that he was going to Ise. Instead of this, he went in

the direction of Higo. He obtained food on the road by begging, lodging at night where he could, and thus reached Kumamoto.

Shortly after his arrival there, he entered a *mochi** shop and bought some *mochi*. The seller of the *mochi* asked him whence he had come. "You have it marked on your hat," said the shopman, "that you are on the road to Ise. Are you travelling alone or in company with some one?"

"I am alone," said Hōtaku. "I have come from Kii, from the village of Hirasawa."

"How is it that you left your home alone?"

"It was on account of a step-mother who treated me cruelly."

"How did it happen that you came all around here to go to Ise?"

"Well," said Hōtaku, with tears in his eyes, "after setting out, I felt so miserable that I thought I would return to my home, but I heard that my step-mother was so enraged by my running away that she would not think of receiving me back again. So I went on, begging from place to place, not knowing what else to do, and at last I have reached this town; may I ask its name?"

* Rice-cakes of a very glutinous kind, much like our bread dough in taste.

The *mochi* man was moved by the story. "As I am in want of a boy in the house," said he, "if you like to stop with me, I will make use of you."

Hōtaku gladly accepted the offer; his chief aim being to pass the time and to make preparations for the realizing of the great object of his life; and this he could do as well here as elsewhere. He agreed therefore to serve the *mochi* man.

In order to obtain the favour and confidence of his master, Hōtaku exerted himself to the very utmost, sitting up late at night and rising early in the morning. Though his master often left money about, he did not attempt to take any, thus creating the impression that he was a thoroughly honest lad.

He served the *mochi* man for two years. At the end of this time, his master thought that Hōtaku's diligence and perseverance ought to be rewarded in some better way than he had it in his power to do. So he recommended him to a man who had a larger business than himself. He sent him to a friend who kept a large *reusa* ware shop.*

Here too Hōtaku made himself very useful, soon winning the confidence of his master, so much so that

* *Reusa* is a shop where such things as wood, charcoal, brooms, and the like are sold.

the master was quite careless about the way in which he allowed Hōtaku to handle his money. He empowered Hōtaku to pay his accounts and receive money on his behalf almost every day.

When he saw how he was trusted, Hōtaku thought to himself:—"I could take twenty or thirty *ryō* at any time, but this would be entirely insufficient for my purpose: I must manage to get about a hundred, and then I will be off. This I can easily do by forgery of some kind."

Soon after this Hōtaku had occasion to go to the baron of the Kumamoto castle to collect the money due to his master. The account only amounted to four *ryō*. Hōtaku altered the figure four into a hundred, and the forgery being undiscovered,* he carried off this amount.

He immediately shaved his head, and, assuming the costume of a priest, set out for Bingo. He was now just twenty years of age.

One evening Hōtaku got benighted, and, not knowing the way, was thinking of sleeping in the open plain in the middle of which he found himself, when he discovered a small building that had been used as a shrine. Into this building he crept, and was settling himself to sleep, when he saw a man come up, light a fire in front of the

* This sounds very incredible.

building, and sit down on the balcony that surrounded it. He was very tall and wore two swords, each of which was encased in a red sheath. By his looks he appeared to be a robber; and such indeed he was.

Hōtaku gave a cough, to let the man know that he was there, and then asked:—"Are you a *samurai* who, like myself, is on a journey? Will you kindly allow me to warm myself by your fire?"

"Whence does the priest come?" asked the robber.

"I am a pilgrim-priest," replied Hōtaku. "I wander about the country hither and thither. I do not belong to one place more than to another. But may I ask whence you come? You do not look like a man who belongs to this part of the country."

"I too am a man who has no fixed abode," replied the robber. "With the sky for my roof and the whole country as my dwelling-place, with the clothes and money of the passers-by to supply my needs, I do not know what it is to want. But, by the way, I have just come to the end of my stock of money and should like to borrow a little of you."

Without appearing in any way alarmed, Hōtaku took three out of his pocket and gave them to the robber.

"As I am very poor," said the robber. "I may as well take all you have." Here he stretched out his hand



and took the purse from Hōtaku's pocket, and then, drawing the sword that Hōtaku had in his belt, he examined it closely, and, seeing the Tokugawa crest on it, exclaimed:—"Ah! you seem to have some fine things about you. This I will relieve you of too. When I become prosperous, I will make some return to you for what I am taking."

The robber was about to depart; but Hōtaku seized the sheath of one of his swords and stopped him. "You have taken my money," said Hōtaku, "and now you want to carry off this sword; if you persist in attempting this, I will throw away my life rather than lose the weapon. But come and listen to what I have to say. It is no use my attempting to hide anything from you. I will tell you all."

Here Hōtaku related to the robber the whole history of his early life and the designs which he had concocted. "Now," said he at the conclusion, "having come thus far in my career, if I find that you are determined to stand in the way of my further progress by attempting to carry off the weapon upon the possession of which my success in the future depends, then, I tell you plainly, I will sell my life dearly rather than lose it; and though our fight may end in my death, unless I am very much mistaken you will not come off scot-free. I

shall leave my mark on you; a mark that will probably lead to your arrest. If, on the other hand, you will promise to help me in realizing my great purpose, then I solemnly promise that, on its realization, you shall be exalted to rank and enriched with emoluments. Choose what you will do. If you fight, remember that you fight against one who is desperate and who will not lose his life for a trifle."

The robber suddenly knelt at Hōtaku's feet, and said:—"I am Akagawa Daizen, a knight-errant of Mito. I am astounded by the disclosures you have made to me. If you have such a grand purpose as this in your mind, then I shall be most happy to give you my assistance. In return I shall look to you to reward me by creating me a baron." Here Daizen returned the sword and the money that he had taken.

The two men consulted together as to how they should act to compass the end they had in view. "It seems to me," said Hōtaku, "that previous to giving out that I am the Shōgun's son, it is essential that I should collect money and obtain a certain number of followers; and it will be necessary also for me to be able to tell how I was brought up. While this is being done, will you not hide yourself somewhere in the neighbourhood? When I have obtained the necessary


accessories to the position I am about to assume, I will send for you."

"There is no need to act in this way," replied the robber. "I have about one hundred and fifty *ryō* that I took from a woman whom I killed a short time ago. Then I have a cousin who is the *yamabushi** of a temple called the Jōraku-in, situated in Nagahora, Mino. This man can be taken into the plot and made to say that you were brought up under his care. We can collect a number of followers in Nagahora. It will make little matter who they are—robbers, farmers, or what not. When we have men enough to make a good show, we will go up to Ōsaka; and when we get there, I know how to make any amount of money. So the first thing we will decide on is to go to the Jōraku-in."

Hōtaku was pleased with this idea. So the two went to Nagahora; and as soon as they had collected some fifty-five followers, they thought it high time to make preparations for appearing in public. They ordered a number of articles to be made, such as clothes, swords,

* *Yamabushi* means sleeping in the mountains, and was originally applied to wandering priests. They belonged to an order called the Shugendō, founded by a priest called Shōbō. *Shugenja* is another name applied to priests belonging to this sect. They were half Buddhist half Shintō. The term in this story and elsewhere is applied to settled priests in charge of temples, who doubtless belonged to the Shugendō denomination.

curtains, and the like: each article being marked with the Tokugawa crest. Hōtaku assumed the name of Tokugawa Ten-ichibō. Daizen became his chief councillor; and two sharp-witted men called Watanabe Jidayū and Honda Godayū became knights in attendance. When all the preparations were complete the party travelled by easy stages to Ōsaka.





CHAPTER II.

On reaching Ōsaka, through the assistance rendered by a friend of Daizen's, Ten-ichibō succeeded in hiring a large house, where he took up his quarters. In front of the house a notice-board was placed, on which the words:—"The temporary residence of Tokugawa Ten-ichibō," were inscribed.

Shortly after their arrival, the head of the ward in which Ten-ichibō's temporary residence was situated sent to the house to say that such a great personage as the Shōgun's son should not have taken up his quarters in the ward without giving notice to the ward officers, and added that he would be found fault with for not having promptly reported Ten-ichibō's arrival to the Mayor of the city.

"There is no reason for complaint," replied Godayū. "You should be very grateful for the honour of having such an august personage in your ward. If anyone finds fault with you, send them to me. You townsfolk, I suppose, are at a loss how to act on such occasions, not having a Shōgun's son here every day."

The head of the ward in which the house was

situated reported what had taken place to the Mayor of Ōsaka, and the latter sent two messengers to the house in which Ten-ichibō was residing. The messengers complained that curtains bearing the Tokugawa crest were hung round his dwelling without the authorities being informed that a member of the Tokugawa family was coming. "And," added the messengers, "the Mayor says that you are to come to see him about this at once."

"Tell him that I am not going to see him," replied Ten-ichibō. "Is the Shōgun's son, do you think, going to the Mayor like one who has committed an offence? If the Mayor has any business with me, he will have to come here to see me."

This was reported to the Mayor, and he determined to go and see the visitor himself. On his arrival Ten-ichibō received him with a good deal of pomp, and showed him the sword and the document which the Shōgun had given Sawano. After inspecting these, the Mayor thought there could be no mistake about Ten-ichibō's being the real son of the Shōgun.

Ten-ichibō was in want of money; to obtain this, he issued notes of hand, which promised that every person lending money should be repaid with land, at the rate of one hundred *koku* for every hundred *ryō* lent. In this way, in Ōsaka alone, he collected eighty-five thousand

ryō. He went to Kyōto and adopted the same plan, collecting about sixty thousand *ryō* in that city.

While this was going on, the Mayors of Ōsaka and Kyōto sent in post haste to Edo to report what had happened and to ask whether the personage travelling under the name of Ten-ichibō was in reality the son of the Shōgun.

On the arrival of the messengers, the Shōgun was asked whether he had any recollection of giving such a document to any one as that which Ten-ichibō was said to possess. He replied that he had a distinct recollection of so doing.

Messages were therefore despatched to Kyōto and Ōsaka to warn the Mayors of those cities not to treat Ten-ichibō rudely, since there was every probability of his being the son of the Shōgun.

The effect of the messages was to add to the honours paid to Ten-ichibō. When he saw this, he thought that he could not do better than start for Edo at once. This resolve he immediately put into execution. He travelled slowly after the manner of great personages in those days, and with great pomp. Long before he reached the Shōgun's capital, the news of his approach had spread all over Edo, and the townsfolk were waiting in anxious suspense for his arrival. One day, it was in everybody's mouth

that Tokugawa Ten-ichibō had actually reached the city and had taken up his quarters in Yatsuyama, Shiba.

On the matter being reported to the Shōgun, he said he could not of course consent to see the new arrival till his identification as his own son was placed beyond a doubt, and he therefore appointed Ō-oka Tadasuke Echizen-no-Kami and Matsudaira Izu-no-Kami, the Mayors of the city*, to investigate the case.

Tadasuke, on hearing what had occurred, said at once that he was positive that the personage so much talked about was not the real son of the Shōgun. "For," said he, "if he had been, instead of obtaining money in the way he has, he would have sent up to the Shōgun and received from him all the money he required, and would have had State officials despatched to escort him to Edo."

Tadasuke sent two messengers to Ten-ichibō. They were instructed to inquire why, without reporting his arrival, he had made use of the Shōgun's crest on the drapery that surrounded his dwelling, and to inform him that, as one of the City *Bugyō*, Tadasuke had certain questions to put to him, and that therefore he was to come to the *Bugyō's* office.

* All the investigation seems to have been done by Tadasuke in this and many other legal cases, though Matsudaira figures now and again towards the close of the trial of Ten-ichibō.

Ten-ichibō made the same reply as he had done at Ōsaka. "The *Bugyō's* gate," said he, "is a gate through which persons who are suspected of some crime pass in and out. The son of the Shōgun is not one who can make himself so cheap as to go to the *Bugyō's* office like an ordinary person. If the *Bugyō* has any business with Ten-ichibō, it is his place to come here."

To this Tadasuke answered that whoever he might be it made little matter; he was now quartered in the city of Edo and therefore was under the jurisdiction of its Mayors. He might be the son or the brother of the Shōgun, but that did not absolve him from appearing at court when summoned. He added that if he refused to appear he should be obliged to send officers to bring him.

Ten-ichibō thought it best under these circumstances to go. On his arriving at the entrance of the Court of Justice, Daizen, who walked in front of him, said that his master could not enter the Court by the small gate, it would be beneath his rank to do so; he therefore wished the large gate opened.

The officers in charge of the gate refused to comply with this request. "Whether your master is guilty of any offence or not, makes little matter to us," said they. "He has come here to be examined, and therefore he must enter by the same gate by which other people enter."

Daizen consented, and his master entered the building. He was making his way to the chief seat, when, with a loud voice, Tadasuke called out:—"Ten-ichibō! take the lowest seat. You may deceive others, but you cannot deceive Echizen, you crafty fellow!"

Smiling, Ten-ichibo replied:—"Is Echizen gone out of his mind? Is it that his receiving three thousand *koku* a year, instead of three hundred bags that he used to receive, and his being made one of the *Bugyō* of this city, is too much for him, and that he is off his head with pride? Were I to take notice of all your rudeness, Sir, it would end in your having to commit suicide. But this I do not intend to do."

"To me you appear no other than an impostor," replied Tadasuke.

Here the examination commenced; and the tale concocted by Ten-ichibō and Daizen was given in all its details. After this was finished, the sword and the document which the Shōgun had given to Sawano were shown to Tadasuke as a conclusive proof of the identity of their possessor.

Tadasuke had reckoned on frightening Ten-ichibō into a confession of his imposture as he had often done before when the persons examined were conscious of guilt. But this not succeeding, and he being unable to produce

any evidence worthy of being confronted with the minute details furnished by Ten-ichibō and his followers, the Chief-Magistrate felt that no other course was open to him than to confess himself in the wrong and for the time being ask Ten-ichibō to pardon his insolence.

This course Tadasuke took, galling as it was to his pride. He confessed that he had been mistaken and said that, as there seemed to be no doubt about Ten-ichibō's identity, a meeting with his father should be arranged shortly.

This brought that day's examination to a close.





CHAPTER III.

Tadasuke's decision was reported to the Shōgun; and he, fully persuaded that Ten-ichibō was his real son, was anxious that arrangements should be made for their meeting without delay.

Tadasuke was informed of this. He demurred. He said he was unwilling to take any part in bringing about a meeting of which he highly disapproved. "I am not convinced," said the Mayor, "that Tenichi-bō is the real son of Yoshimune. I therefore wish to investigate the case further."

To this the lords in attendance on the Shōgun objected. "You have given your decision in favour of Ten-ichibō's identity," said they, "and is it not preposterous of you to ask for time to consider the case more thoroughly?"

On this request of Tadasuke's being reported to the Shōgun, he was so annoyed that he ordered his confinement in his private house.

Tadasuke was fully convinced that were time allowed him to send men to Kii to collect evidence, he would have no difficulty in proving that Ten-ichibō was a daring impostor. But how could the Shōgun be prevented from

holding the interview on which his heart was so much set? Ever fruitful in resources, Tadasuke at once recollected that there was one man in the Shōgun's capital whose advice Yoshimune would hardly venture to spurn. This was no other than Mito Chūnagon, a near relation of the Shōgun's. This baron was a special friend of Tadasuke's. But the question was, how could he make known what had occurred to this lord and solicit his help? To do it by letter while his house was so strictly guarded night and day was an utter impossibility. After a few minutes' consideration, Tadasuke called one of his chief retainers and requested him to get ready a coffin, and to give out that his (the retainer's) mother was dead and was about to be buried.

After nightfall Tadasuke entered the coffin and was borne out through what was called the *Fujō-mon*, or the Unclean Gate, a gate which was seldom opened except when corpses had to be conveyed through it. He reached the residence of the Mito baron, in Koishikawa, without being discovered.

Tadasuke obtained an audience with Chūnagon; to whom he related all that had occurred, and at its close said:—

“Ten-ichibō is not the Shōgun's son, notwithstanding that he has in his possession articles which seem to

prove his identity. His face plainly indicates that he is of plebeian origin. But I stand alone in holding this opinion. Every man of influence in this city is in favour of the Shōgun's giving Ten-ichibō an immediate audience. Unless you can do something to prevent this, and can induce Yoshimune to give me time to send down to Kii to make inquiries about Ten-ichibō's real history, I am confident that the Shōgun will treat this impostor as a true man; and in that case, when the real facts of the case are disclosed, as they most certainly will be, Yoshimune will deeply regret that he should have allowed himself to be so easily duped. Though my protest against an immediate interview being arranged may cost me my life, no other course is open to me than to make it, unless, indeed, I consent to violate my conscience and to act disloyally to my superior officer."

The Mito baron had a heart which promptly responded to such noble sentiments as these, and he determined to intercede with the Shōgun on Tadasuke's behalf.

His intercession was successful, and the Shōgun gave orders that time for further investigation of the case should be given prior to its final settlement.

Through assistance rendered by Chūnagon, Tadasuke returned to his house. The next day he examined several of Ten-ichibō's followers, but without discovering anything

that could be used as evidence of their master's imposture. He saw that there was nothing for it but to despatch messengers to Kii and wait quietly till they returned. Consequently, he gave out that he was ill and unable to attend to the duties of his Court.*

Tadasuke now called two of his most trusted retainers, Hirai Heijirō and another, whose name has not been handed down, whom, after fully impressing with the gravity of the occasion, he bade go to Kii and make minute inquiries into the matter. He told them that they were to spare no money either on the road or in collecting information at Hirasawa, and that on no account were they to be away longer than ten days.

The two messengers set out, and, by travelling day and night, succeeded in reaching the village of Hirasawa, in two days and a half.

They made minute inquiries, but for some time could get no information whatever bearing on the case. As hour after hour passed, a feeling of despair began to settle down on their minds, and they thought that, since they never could go back to Edo and confess their failure, they would have to commit suicide. But day and night they continued their search. The Kōdenji cemetery was

* The Shōgun seems to have rescinded the order for Tadasuke's confinement.

examined in every part in the hope of finding some trace of the death of the real son of the Shōgun. At first they discovered nothing, but one day they came across two graves which hitherto had escaped their notice. They were covered over with grass, and though there was an inscription on them, it had become illegible. By examining the temple records, however, the messengers found out that on the 15th of March of the year *Tori*, in the period of Hōei, a woman and her infant son had died on the same day and had been buried there; and that an old woman called San had erected the tombstone. They inquired about this old woman, and were informed that she had burnt herself to death while tipsy.

As the date of the death of the child and its mother corresponded with the time at which Sawano had been sent away by the Shōgun, they had little doubt that the remains which the two neglected graves contained, were no other than those of Yoshimune's son and his mother. But they had still to find out who this Ten-ichibō was.

They thought that the best way of discovering who had lived in the village about the time of the death of these persons, and what had become of this person or persons, would be to examine the official register. On doing this, they found that there was one Hōtaku, who had lived with a *yamabushi* in a temple known as the Kwan-ō-in; and

that, on the priest's dying suddenly, this individual had set out to go to some other village, but had been attacked and killed by robbers on the sea-shore near at hand. "The articles that were found scattered about on the beach the morning after the murder are still with us," said the authorities who showed the register to the retainers.

On the retainers asking to see these things, a man was sent to a neighbouring storehouse and the following articles were placed before the messengers :—

One cloth.

One shirt.

One wool-lined garment.

A basket hat with Hōtaku's name on it.

One basket.

A bamboo walking-stick.

These the messengers took. On inquiry they found out that there was a man who knew Hōtaku, one—Kyūsuke. His services they procured, and they flew back to Edo as fast as *kago* and horses would carry them.





CHAPTER IV.

In the meantime, Yoshimune, still being of opinion that Ten-ichibō was his real son, was very anxious to see him, and one day, in the hearing of several of his associates, he gave a sigh, and said:—"Is Echizen not well yet? How is Ten-ichibō's case going on?"

His attendants seeing how troubled he was, sent to Tadasuke telling him that he must settle the case by the following morning, and that if he could not do this, he was to resign his position of *Bugyō* that same night.

Tadasuke on hearing this said to himself:—"It is now only seven days since my messengers left: it is utterly impossible that they can be back at the earliest before the day after to-morrow, and I am told that I had better resign if I cannot settle the case between this and to-morrow morning. If I do as they direct, whoever is appointed to succeed me will be sure to bring about a meeting between Ten-ichibō and the Shōgun to-morrow morning, and so all the labour that I have expended on the case will be thrown away. No; rather than resign I will die. To-morrow morning I will commit suicide, and my son shall do the same. Before I do so, however, I will write a letter in which I will declare it to be my

solemn conviction at the point of death that Ten-ichibō is an impostor, and I will warn my successor not to consent to his having an audience with the Shōgun. In that case, when they find I have laid down my life rather than act contrary to my convictions, they will not be in a hurry to arrange for the interview. And while they are considering what to do, my messengers will arrive, and, unless I am very much mistaken, will bring with them conclusive evidence of Ten-ichibō's imposture."

So that night Tadasuke, after preparing the document containing his dying testimony, called his son, then only eleven years old, and told him to be in readiness to commit suicide in the morning. Then, summoning one of his favourite retainers, a man called Ikeda Daisuke, to his side, he addressed him as follows:—

"Before I die I have a word I wish to say to you. After I am gone you and the two faithful men who will arrive from Kii are not to pay any regard to the precept which teaches that a faithful servant should not serve two masters. Before three days have elapsed you are to endeavour to obtain employment under the new *Bugyō*. Be sure and acquaint the two men who have gone to Kii with this wish of mine."

Tadasuke now called all his followers, and exhorted them to seek service under other masters after his de-

cease. "Let not my name be disgraced," said he, "by your wandering about the country like men who have no ties and no responsibilities." He then gave them each a cup of *sake* and solemnly took his leave of them.

When this ceremony was over, his wife came forward and said:—"My husband's having to lay down his life in this way is nothing extraordinary. Having married a *samurai*, of course I have always anticipated that such a thing as this might happen. Did I choose to do so, I might fortify my mind and decide to survive my husband and my son, but with those whom I most love in the other world, what inducement would there be for me to remain in this? I therefore beg to be allowed to die with my husband and my son."

"To be sure," replied Tadasuke; "nothing could be more reasonable than such a request. Then we will all die together. The lad shall disembowel himself first, and you shall cut off his head; then you shall cut your own throat, and I will cut off your head; after which I will disembowel myself, and Daisuke shall cut off my head."

The necessary preparations were all made, and the party solemnly waited for the day to dawn.

When the time for the carrying out of their dire resolution was approaching, and they were all ready to lay down their lives in the calm and ceremonious manner

which the custom of those days prescribed and which was looked on as a sign of noble breeding, it was reported that the two messengers who had been sent to Kii had arrived.

In rushed those two noble men, almost dead with fatigue, their persons bearing marks of the speed with which they had travelled: their hair tied in knots behind and allowed to hang uncombed and dishevelled down their backs, with tight belts round their waists to hold them together and to enable them to stand the tremendous shaking of the rough sedan used for rapid journeys in those days. They had no sooner entered the house than with a loud voice they exclaimed:—"Ten-ichibō is an impostor."

Tadasuke was wild with delight. He ordered the messengers to come to him at once. They were loath to do this, thinking it improper for them to appear before their master in the plight they were in; but Tadasuke insisted, so they came in, and gave a full account of all that they had discovered.

Tadasuke said that he should no longer look on the two men as his retainers, but as his brothers. He told his children that henceforth they were to call each of the men by whose exertions their father's life had been saved uncle.

Tadasuke now removed his death robes and put on his ordinary court dress, and forthwith sent to say that he had recovered from his illness and was prepared to resume his duties. At the same time he communicated to the Shōgun the information which he had obtained.

Yoshimune, after hearing all the particulars, said that Tadasuke was to be allowed to deal with the case in the way he thought best.

So, the same day, Tadasuke sent a messenger to Ten-ichibō, informing him that he had recovered from his illness and that, after conferring with Matsudaira Izu-no-Kami, he had resolved to make arrangements for his having an audience with the Shōgun. He added that he intended to have delivered this message in person, but that he did not feel quite well enough to undertake the task :—"To-morrow," said he, "if you will come to my house, I will instruct you in the ceremonies to be observed at your first interview with the Shōgun, and afterwards will accompany you to his palace."

On hearing this, Ten-ichibō's joy knew no bounds: he felt as elated as if he were about to ascend to the third heaven. The next day he put on his very best clothes, and, taking a number of followers with him, went in great state to the Mayor's residence, which was situated near the Sukiya Bridge.

Tadasuke had made up his mind to arrest Ten-ichibō. Consequently he had given orders beforehand that when Ten-ichibō passed within the precincts of his residence, all the gates should be closed and barred after him. At the same time, to allay suspicion, the followers of Tadasuke were directed to pay the greatest respect to Ten-ichibō up to the last.

On his arrival, Tadasuke went out to the front door to meet him, and conducted him into the guest's chamber. After he was seated, "Izu-no-Kami will be here directly," said Tadasuke. "In the meanwhile, please sit down and rest a little." Thus saying, he left the room.

Kyūsuke had previously been instructed to act as a waiter, and, on entering the room where Ten-ichibō was sitting, to look well at him: if there was no mistake about his being Hōtaku, Kyūsuke was to watch his chance and pull Tadasuke's sleeve. Tadasuke also gave directions that the articles which had been brought from Kii should be hung up round the hall through which Ten-ichibō was to pass on his way out of the house.

As soon as these preparations were complete, Tadasuke went again into the room where Ten-ichibō was sitting and ordered refreshments to be served up for him. After he had been there some little time, a messenger arrived from Matsudaira to say that, owing to his being

obliged to attend to some public business, he was unable to come to Tadasuke's house to meet Ten-ichibō, and that, at the risk of being considered impolite, he must beg Ten-ichibō to come to Tadasuke's residence on the following day at 10 o'clock.

"You hear what the messenger says," said Tadasuke to Daizen. "Please to inform your lord that we wish him to come again to-morrow morning."

"As it is official business," remarked Ten-ichibō, "which has prevented Izu-no-Kami from coming, there is no help for it."

Ten-ichibō now gave directions to his attendants to prepare for his return. Then slowly and deliberately he rose and descended from the dais on which he had been sitting and gradually made his way towards the entrance hall. While he was doing this, Kyūsuke glided forward and pulled Tadasuke's sleeve.

As Ten-ichibō approached the hall, his eyes rested on the articles which he had left on the sea-shore at Hirasawa as they hung round the entrance. His countenance changed and he became ghastly pale. He stepped back two or three paces as though afraid to proceed.

In the midst of his embarrassment, he heard Tadasuke's voice stern and loud:—"Hotaku, wait!"

Hotaku stood still, trembling with fear.

"Arrest him," shouted the *Bugyō*; and suddenly a score of armed men who had been lying in ambush sprang out from the place of their concealment, surrounded the impostor, bound him and led him away.

Daizen saw in an instant to what a pass things had come and determined to sell his life dearly. He slashed away right and left at the soldiers who attempted to arrest him, killing and wounding a large number of them. But at last, by surrounding him with ladders, they succeeded in capturing him.*

Hōtaku saw that there was no use in attempting to hide anything, so he confessed the whole of his crimes.

Daizen at first refused to make any disclosures whatever, but after undergoing torture, relented, and gave the whole history of his past life.

Hōtaku was beheaded, and his head was exposed to view in a public place for some days.

Daizen and all the impostor's chief followers were put to death. Others who had taken part in the plot were banished.

Yoshimune was very much gratified by the pains that Tadasuke took to find out the truth on this occasion. "Had it not been for the superior intelligence of Echizen,"

* A clever device occasionally resorted to in ancient times.

said he, "I should have been deceived by this rogue, and my name would have been dishonoured."

The Shōgun ordered that as a reward for his services on this occasion Tadasuke's income should be increased from three thousand *koku* a year to seven thousand, and that he should be promoted to the office of *Jisha-Bugyō*, or Governor of Temples.

Thus ended one of the most subtle and daring attempts at imposture that Japanese history records. It was fortunate that such a man as Echizen-no-Kami happened to be in office at the time, or the impostor would most certainly have succeeded in establishing his claim, and perfidy would have obtained the rewards which honesty alone merits.



JAPAN IN DAYS OF YORE.

VI.

THE MISFORTUNES OF A SMALL SHOP- KEEPER AND HOW THEY ENDED.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY in the last century, near Temma-bashi, Ōsaka, there lived a man called—Yoichi. When he was young, he gave himself out to be an *Otokodate* ;* and hence had the reputation of being both chivalrous and benevolent. In reality, however, he was neither one nor the other. He kept bad company and spent his time and money in drinking and gambling. After a while he was banished for killing some one in a quarrel. When allowed subsequently to return to his native place, he commenced to live an irregular life again, which led to his becoming a pirate.

In a scuffle on some ship he received a very bad wound, which took a long time to heal. When he recovered he altered his appearance, and thought that no

* *Vide Appendix.*

one would know who he was. He pretended to be a sailor, but carried on robbery all the while.

At this time there was in Dōjima, Ōsaka, a man called—Hikobei, who kept a shop in which articles for women's toilet, such as mirrors, combs, tooth-brushes, rouge and powder, etc., were sold.* Among Hikobei's assistants there was a man called—Yashichi, who was the nephew of Yoichi. This Yashichi had obtained employment in the shop through Yoichi's becoming surety for him. When, therefore, Yashichi subsequently stole some money and ran away, Hikobei applied to Yoichi for the money which had been stolen. But Yoichi obstinately refused to do anything in the matter. This led, in a way that it does not concern us to relate, to the death of both Yashichi and Yoichi.

Hikobei, owing to his various reverses, got into low water, and had to close his shop and set out for Edo. His wife and two children, one aged nine and the other twelve, were left behind in a small house which he had hired for them. It was in the year A.D. 1718 that he reached Edo, when Ō-oka Tadasuke Echizen-no-Kami was one of the Chief Magistrates of the city.

Hikobei settled in a back alley of Hashimoto-chō, and obtained a living by carrying about various articles

* Called *Kōmishimonoya* in Japan.

of women's toilet for sale. Being an Ōsaka man, and hence very careful as to how he used his money,* as well as diligent in his business, he gradually made a nice little sum, and was able to forward remittances to his family in Ōsaka from time to time. He determined that when he had saved about one hundred *ryō* he would go back to Ōsaka again.

After he had been in Edo about five years, he was going his rounds with his wares one morning, when suddenly a heavy thunder-shower came on. He took refuge under the eaves of a house in Bakurō-chō. While he was standing there a woman, who by her looks was about sixty years of age, came out of the house and said, "You will get wet there, you had better come in."

Hikobei, thanking her, entered the house and, after some conversation, he sold her something. She seemed to take a lively interest in his affairs. Subsequent to this whenever Hikobei had a little leisure, he visited the old woman, and gradually they got to be so friendly that she told him everything that concerned her. It seemed that she had formerly served Baron Satake, and had received from him sufficient money to maintain her for
had a nephew called—Ichirozaemon, who kept

* this reputation in olden times.

an inn in Bakurō-chō. Her reason for not living with this nephew was that there was too much noise and bustle in the house to suit her. Hikobei, by means of the old woman, obtained access to this inn and often sold articles to the guests. His familiarity with the landlord gradually led to his borrowing money from him. He often borrowed some twenty or thirty *ryō* at a time, but he invariably returned the same, and so Ichirozaemon came to think Hikobei was a man to be trusted and never refused to accommodate him with what he required. Ichirozaemon's aunt had an equally high opinion of Hikobei's honesty and was ready to do anything for him.

One morning Hikobei came to the old woman and told her that there was a valuable toilet article for sale, for which others had been bidding ninety *ryō*, but which he thought worth a hundred. "In fact, I have offered that amount for it," said he, "and they have agreed to let me have it. I have paid down ten *ryō* of this sum, with the promise of paying the remainder in a day or two. Could you," he asked, "lend me the ninety *ryō*?"

"I have," replied the old woman, "a hundred *ryō* by me, but this I have decided to present to the priest of my temple. I have, however," she continued, "some valuable articles in my possession, which you are at

liberty to use as a security if you wish. By this means you can easily borrow ninety *ryō*."

Hikobei took the articles and asked the landlord of his house,—Hachimon, to borrow the money for him. The landlord only succeeded, however, in getting fifty *ryō*, which he handed to Hikobei that same evening. "The remaining forty," thought Hikobei, "I can easily get. So to-morrow the article will be in my possession."

The same night it happened that Ichirozaemon had a great many guests at his inn, and, as he was very busy, he sent over to his aunt's house to borrow her maid-servant. It was very late when the servant girl had finished her duties at the inn, so she did not go back to her mistress till the next morning.

When she reached the house, she was surprised to find that the old woman was not up, the more so as it was a habit with her to rise very early. The doors were all closed and barred. Thinking something was the matter, she forced open one of the doors, and found the old woman lying dead in a pool of blood. She had evidently been murdered during the night.

The neighbours were called in and Ichirozaemon was sent for. Ichirozaemon searched the house to see if there was not something gone, and he found that the basket in which the old woman kept her valuables was missing.

He asked the servant whether any one had come to the house the night before. He was informed that Hikobei had been there to borrow money, that the things in the basket had been given to him as security wherewith to obtain the same elsewhere, and that he had been informed that the old woman had one hundred *ryō* in her possession which she could not lend.* They now looked for the money, but it was nowhere to be found. Ichirozaemon asked whether any one but Hikobei had entered the house during the preceding day; and whether there was any one who knew of the existence of this money in the house but Hikobei. And being answered in the negative, "Then there is no doubt," said he, "that Hikobei is the culprit." The murder was reported to Tadasuke and Hikobei was arrested on suspicion.

Hikobei denied that he had stolen the money or murdered the old woman. He confessed that he knew of the existence of the hundred *ryō*, and acknowledged that he had borrowed money on the security furnished by the old woman.

Tadasuke was not of opinion that Hikobei was guilty, but as no satisfactory evidence was forthcoming, in ac-

* Her name is not given in the original story. It was a common Japanese practice in pre-Meiji days to refer to a woman only as the wife of—or as the mother of—, no importance being attached to her separate female identity. She was merely an appendix or an adjunct to the man.

cordance with the custom of those days, he ordered him to be tortured. When Hikobei found it hard to bear the pain which he was forced to undergo any longer, he said that he had murdered the old woman and stolen her money, though conscious all the while that he had not been guilty of either of these crimes. He actually went so far as to affix his seal to a document which declared his guilt.

As the crime which he confessed to having committed was a very heinous one, he was condemned to be beheaded, to have the skin of his head removed, and to have the head exposed to public view.

In Fukui-chō, Asakusa, there lived two palanquin-bearers called—Gonzō and—Sukejū. These two men were very poor, but at the same time very honest. The night of the murder they came home from Azabu at a late hour. When they reached Fukui-chō and were about to enter their house, they noticed a man engaged in washing something. But as it was a very cold night, they were anxious to get into the house as soon as possible, so they made no special inquiries. They knocked at the gate which opened into the little alley where their *nagaya* was situated.—Kambei, the owner of the house, came out, and, as he had been awakened out of sleep, was in a bad humour. "You might come home

a little earlier on such a cold night, I should think," said Kambei to the men. "It is very troublesome having to get up and open the gate for people in the middle of the night like this."

"As we are palanquin-bearers," said one of the men, "it is impossible for us to choose our time for coming home. So I hope you will not be too hard on us."

As they went into the house, they saw a man called —Kantarō enter the *nagaya* opposite to theirs. To him Kambei spoke in a good-tempered way. "Where has Kantarō been to-night?" asked the landlord in a bright cheerful voice.

"Why he grumbles with us and not with Kantarō it is hard to see," said the bearers to each other. "We are poor, but we are honest, and work hard to get a living; whereas this Kantarō does nothing but gamble and drink. Why does Kambei treat him with more deference than he does us? It is no doubt owing to the landlord's getting a present from Kantarō every now and again. We will seek some other quarters if this ill-tempered old fellow goes on as he does.—Well, well! as we have had a good job to-day, we will comfort ourselves with a drink and settle in for the night."

The next morning, as it was very cold, the bearers

said to each other :—" Let us go and have a hot bath this morning." On the way, they talked about what had happened the night before. " What could that man have been doing whom we saw in the street last night?" asked one of them. " As Kantarō came in at the gate immediately after us, it was no doubt he who was there. Let us go and have a look at the tub where he was washing."

This they did, and found some blood marks on the side of the tub, which at once aroused their suspicions. " That fellow is always in bad company," said they, " no doubt he has had a quarrel with some one, and has got his sword stained with the blood of his foe." While thus conversing they reached the bath-house.

Here they found that the people were all talking about nothing else but a murder which had been committed the night before, and the carrying off of a hundred *ryō*. When Gonzō and Sukejū heard this, they looked at each other in a knowing way. And when they got outside, they said :—" This fellow Kantarō is no doubt the murderer of the old woman. We will watch him well to see whether he spends much money or not."

A few days after the incidents related above, the bearers heard that Hikobei had been accused and proved guilty of the murder of the old woman, and had been

executed. They thought this very strange, but it was no concern of theirs, so they kept their thoughts to themselves. They had some friends living in Hashimoto-chō who had known Hikobei. These friends said that he was a very honest man and not at all the kind of person to steal or to commit murder. "It is commonly reported," they added, "that it was owing to the torture to which he was subjected that Hikobei confessed to having committed the crime of which he was accused."*

In the meanwhile the bearers noticed that Kantarō was spending money very fast. It was constantly reported that he had obtained large sums by successful gambling. Kantarō's landlord and the neighbours paid great deference to him when they saw how rich he was becoming, but the two bearers treated him with the greatest coldness and watched his every action whenever they came into contact with him.

* There were no doubt thousands of instances of this kind in Japan. Torture was abolished early in the Meiji era.



CHAPTER II.

My story now returns to the family which Hikobei had left in Ōsaka. They had constantly received letters from Hikobei to say that he hoped soon to return to his native place and set up in business again. And just as they were waiting longingly for the time when they should be all united once more, the news of Hikobei's arrest, trial and execution reached them.

His eldest son, Hikosaburō, was then about fifteen years of age. Young though he was, he determined to go up to Edo and procure some part of his father's remains, even supposing that he were unable to obtain more than a single bone.

With a brave heart he set out on foot, and trudged all the way to Kawasaki.* At this place he asked where the heads of criminals were bleached, and was told that they were exposed in two places: one being Kozukahara, and the other Suzugamori; but that the heads of criminals from the West and South were usually exposed in the latter place.

Hikosaburō went to Suzugamori at once. He found that it would be impossible to remove his father's

* Half way between Tōkyō and Yokohama.

remains by day; for a close watch was kept over the bones of the dead. So he determined to try to do it at night.

The place was dreary and desolate, even in the daytime. And at night it was said to be haunted by the ghosts of the criminals whose bones were lying unburied there. Nothing but a strong sense of duty—nothing but the most fervent filial piety, could have induced the lad to go to such a dreadful place at night and alone.

By the light of the stars he found a spot where there lay a large number of dead men's bones all in a confused heap. Which among them were his father's Hikosaburō could not possibly tell. But on thinking over the matter, he remembered having heard that if the blood of a child is dropped on a parent's bone, owing to the affinity between parent and child the blood will be absorbed by the bone, but that in any other case it will run off without entering the bone. This test he resolved to apply. He cut his finger and allowed the blood to drop on several bones, but they did not absorb it in the least. While thus engaged he saw a light in the distance. "It will never do to be caught here," said he to himself, and at once took refuge in some grass that was near. He perceived from his place of concealment that two men were approaching. One was bearing an empty palanquin

and the other carrying a lantern. They were conversing with each other as they went along the road.

"I say, Sukejū," said one of them, "that man Hikobei, whose head was exposed here last year, was certainly put to death by mistake. It was Kantarō who killed the old woman. Were I a relation of Hikobei's, I would make this known far and wide; but as I am not concerned in the matter it is perhaps better that I should remain quiet about it. Ah, poor soul!—he wanders in Hades unable to ascend to the Paradise of bliss."

It was no other than Gonzō who made these remarks. He and his companion were on their way back to Edo after conveying a traveller to a place near.

Hikosaburō was pleased enough to hear these words. "God has brought me into contact with this man," said he, "I will follow him up and endeavour to find out from him something about my poor father."

Here Hikosaburō followed the bearers at a little distance all the way to Edo. But as it was very late when they reached the city, he determined not to make himself known to them till the following day. So, since he was a perfect stranger to the place, and did not know where to go, and had little money to spare, he lay down on some fire-wood near the river and slept till daylight.

At dawn he went to the house of the bearers and

informed them who he was. On hearing that his father had been killed by mistake, Hikosaburō said :—" As my father cannot be brought to life again, there is nothing I can do for him, unless it be to remove the disgrace which has been attached to his name; and *this* I *will* do by finding out who the real murderer was." He asked the two bearers whether they would not help him to carry out this resolve.

"This lad," said Gonzō to Sukejū, "has come all the way from Ōsaka to find out something about his father. He is evidently a boy with good feelings. Shall we not do our best to help him to discover the real culprit?"

Sukejū fell in with the proposal and the two men commenced to make inquiries. They went to Hashimoto-chō and made known to Hachiemon, the landlord of Hikobei's house, their suspicions in reference to Kantarō.

"You may be quite right in thinking that Kantarō was the murderer;" said Hachiemon, "but you have no clear proof of the same; and therefore, in bringing the matter before the authorities, we must be careful not to commit ourselves in any way. I will write a letter to the Chief Magistrate which will bring the matter up for consideration without letting him know what our suspicions are. He wrote as follows:—

"To His Excellency Ō-oka Tadasuke, Echizen-no-Kami.

"Sir,—With the greatest deference and respect I venture to address a letter to your Excellency. I have the honour to inform your Excellency that the son of Hikobei, Hikosaburō, has come to my house from Ōsaka. He asserts that his father was innocent of the guilt of which he was accused and for which he was executed, that his condemnation was owing to the imperfect way in which I represented his case to the authorities, and that therefore he looks upon me as his father's enemy whom he ought to kill. With my head he says he will comfort the departed spirit of his father. He has come all the way from Ōsaka alone for this purpose. I have told him that it was impossible for me to interfere in any way with the decision of the Court, and that therefore I am not to be held responsible for what has happened. But he acts like a madman and will not listen to anything I say. On inquiring where he is staying in Edo, I was told that he is not living anywhere here. He seems to have come straight to my house from Ōsaka. As he refuses to listen to anything I say, what to do with him I do not know. There is no place to which I can send him in Edo, and I cannot prevail on him to go back to Ōsaka. I beg that your Excellency will kindly make use of your august power to induce him to return to his native place.

I have the honour to be,

Your obedient servant,

—Hachiemon."

Hikosaburō was taken, bound, to Tadasuke with the letter. Tadasuke informed him that his father having committed theft and murder had been condemned to death, but that Hachiemon was not responsible for the course that things had taken. "Your father confessed his guilt;" said Tadasuke. "It is natural enough for you to wish to avenge his death in some way or other, but as there is no means of doing this, you had better go quietly back to Ōsaka."

Here, with tears in his eyes, Hikosaburō assured the Magistrate that his father was innocent. "I know," said he, "the man who is suspected of having committed the murder. There are two men who can give evidence on the matter." He now gave the names and the address of the two bearers.

"I admire," said Tadasuke, "the zeal with which you espouse your father's cause. I will make inquiries into the matter. In the meanwhile you shall be placed in charge of Hachiemon."

The next day a summons from Tadasuke reached Kambei, which ran as follows:—"Having certain inquiries to make of Gonzō and Sukejū, your tenants, you are to

appear at this Court to-morrow morning with the two men above named."

Kambei, going at once to the two bearers, asked:—"What on earth have you been doing? Either you have been taking things from some person whom you have been bearing, or you have committed some other outrage; for you are summoned to the Court to-morrow. Here's a *pretty business!* There is no knowing what trouble one may get into with bearers in the house!"

Gonzō was incensed by this remark. "We are poor," said he, "but *dishonest* we are not; so you need not speak to us in this rude way. To-morrow will show whether we have done anything wrong or not."

The next day they went to the Court, and Tadasuke inquired where the two men had met Hikosaburō; and afterwards by degrees elicited from them all they knew of the doings of Kantarō.

After their evidence had been given, "Please your Excellency," said Kambei, "not to attend to anything that these men say about Kantarō. He is no such person as they represent. He is a very hard working man."

"What work does he do?" asked Tadasuke.

At first Kambei did not answer, but afterwards said:—"He is a vegetable seller."

"He is nothing of the kind," interrupted Gonzō.

"He spends all his time in gambling. And why our landlord is so fond of him and treats us with such contempt we cannot tell."

"Why do you defend a rogue like Kantarō?" asked Tadasuke, raising his voice. "You are no better than he and shall be handcuffed."

Here he ordered handcuffs to be placed on Kambei, and then gave him permission to return to his house.

Kambei was intending to relate all that had happened to Kantarō, but when he reached his house he found that the latter was under arrest and had been carried off to prison.

The next day Kantarō was examined. He persisted in saying that he was innocent of the crime with which he was charged. So Tadasuke sent for his wife and addressed her as follows:—"Last year you improved the state of your house and purchased all kinds of ornaments. Where did you get the money with which to do this?"

"As I am a woman," replied the wife, "of course I know nothing of the manner in which my husband gets his money."

"It is no use your trying to hide things;" rejoined Tadasuke; "for your husband has already confessed that the money which you have been using was stolen from an old woman whom he killed in Bakurō-chō. If

you do not confess, then, though you *are* a woman, you will be imprisoned.”*

Kantarō's wife now confessed that her husband was the author of both the theft and the murder.

Whereupon Kantarō was called and was informed that there was no object in his concealing his crime any longer, as his wife had confessed it. “If you confess,” said Tadasuke, “I will spare your wife and children, otherwise I cannot promise to do so.”

Kantarō, thinking it was useless to try and conceal his guilt any longer, openly acknowledged it.

“How did you get to know there was any money to be stolen?” asked Tadasuke.

“I overheard a conversation on the subject between Hikobei and the old woman;” replied Kantarō.

Here the usual document containing the formal statement of his crime was drawn up and Kantarō affixed his seal to it.

Not long after the events recorded above, a summons was issued commanding all those concerned in any way with the case which had been tried to appear in Court on a certain day.

* A somewhat tricky way of eliciting the truth, often resorted to by Tadasuke when he was convinced that a certain person was guilty and was desirous of eliciting the confession which the Law required prior to the passing of the final sentence.

On the day appointed, Tadasuke addressed Ichirozaemon, the owner of the inn in Bakurō-chō, as follows:—"You were very positive that the author of the murder and the theft which had been committed was Hikobei; and owing to what you said about it Hikobei was tortured and caused to confess that he was guilty of these crimes. But now *another* person has made his appearance who says that it was he who killed the old woman and stole her money.

Here Tadasuke commanded Kantarō to confess to Ichirozaemon what he had done.

Ichirozaemon was too much astonished to utter a single word.

"You are to be blamed," continued Tadasuke, "for suspecting Hikobei in the way you did. What have you to say for yourself?"

Ichirozaemon bowed his head to the ground, but made no reply.

"*You* are still young," said Tadasuke, turning to Hikosaburō, "but your zeal in endeavouring to wipe off the disgrace which was attached to your father's name is highly creditable to you."

"Your being moved by the sight of such filial piety as that exhibited by Hikosaburō," observed Takasuke to Gonzō, Sukejū, and Hachimon, "and being willing to

furnish the evidence whereby the real criminal was discovered is very praiseworthy."

"*You*," observed Tadasuke to Kambei, "being a landlord, are supposed to know the characters of your tenants. What business then had you to be on good terms with a thief and a murderer?"

Kambei was silent.

"Excuse me for speaking," said Gonzō, "but your Excellency has just remarked that Hikobei was condemned owing to what Ichirozaemon said. I should like to ask whether your Excellency is guided in his decisions by what those who come here for judgment are pleased to say. Ichirozaemon's asserting that Hikobei was the culprit should not have been allowed to influence your Excellency."

Hikosaburō here thanked the Judge for having made it clear that his father was innocent, and asked that as a favour his father's corpse might be given to him.

"If it were one of us who had been the means of an innocent man's death, we should certainly have been punished," interposed Hachiemon, "but as it is an officer of the Government who has acted thus I suppose nothing can be done."

"Although," added Gonzō, addressing Tadasuke, "you are so clever that it is said that no such Magistrate

has ever sat on the bench, yet, as the proverb has it, 'Even the pen of Kōbō Daishi makes a slip now and again.' Evidently this Hikobei's case is one in which your Excellency has been deceived. What do you propose to do? It is not enough to say that Hikobei is innocent and Kantarō guilty. Something else must be done."

Here they began to find fault with the Magistrate one after another.

"Be silent, all of you," shouted Tadasuke.

"*No*," replied Gonzō! "I will *not* be silent. For Hikosaburō's sake the case cannot be left like this. Something must be done to make it clear to all that his father was innocent of the guilt for which he was put to death. Some compensation too ought to be given to Hikosaburō for the disgrace that has been brought on his family by the mistake which has been made."

"What *can* I do?" asked Tadasuke; and then, after a pause, continued:—"Well, keep quiet! I will give directions that a reward for Hikosaburō's filial piety be brought."

Here orders were given to an officer to bring the said reward. The friends of Hikosaburō, as well as the d himself, were all wondering what would be forth-

coming, when, presently, a man was ushered into the Court. His face was very pale, like one who has been kept in close confinement for a long time.

"*This*," said Tadasuke, pointing to the man, "is the reward that I give Hikosaburō. *Look well at him.*"

They looked, *and found that it was no other than Hikobei himself.*

Here Hikosaburō, forgetting in whose presence he was, sprang forward, and, leaping over the space which lay between him and his father, was soon at his side weeping tears of joy, and grasping his father's hand to make sure that it was his very self and not a ghost that he saw.

Tadasuke now informed them all that by Hikobei's words and manner he perceived that he was not the kind of man to commit the crimes of which he was accused, so he determined to keep him alive pending the discovery of the real murderer. "The head which was exposed," said Tadasuke, "had the skin of the face removed so that it should not be identified. It was the head of another criminal. And now, as through the exertions of Gonzō and Sukejū the real murderer has been found, I restore Hikobei to his family. Do not think that I am at all annoyed by what has been said to me by these two bearers or by Hachiemon.

I am glad that the town contains such honest, outspoken people as these."

Tadasuke here ordered Ichirozaemon, as an atonement for his having falsely accused Hikobei and in lieu of the money which had been forfeited to the Government when Hikobei was arrested, to pay him the sum of fifty *ryō*.

Kantarō was condemned to be beheaded and to have his head exposed after death; his wife and children to have their property confiscated and to be banished from the city.

Kambei's property was also confiscated and he too was banished from the town. Thus ended one of the noted cases tried by Tadasuke, which is related at considerable length in the pages of the *Ō-oka Meiyo Seidan*,* and which as a stage-play has always been highly popular.

* Vide *supra*, p 73.



APPENDIX TO TALE VI

The *Otokodate* or *Kyōkaku* [侠客].

THIS term is the Japanese equivalent of the 任俠, *jen-chieh* of China. In China the origin of these stalwarts* is traced back to a passage in the 史記, *Shi-chi*, which affirms that when men who trust each other implicitly combine their strength in order to vindicate the cause of the oppressed, they will prove to be irresistible. Many are the deeds of chivalry related in Chinese annals that are said to have been performed by the *jen-chieh*. But with these we are not concerned. In Japan these self-appointed redressers of human wrongs first figure prominently in history in the early days of the Tokugawa age; though under another name they existed previously. The term *otokodate* comes from

* I have adopted this term as perhaps the nearest English equivalent we have to the Japanese *otokodate*, who above all things gloried in his physical strength. In the United States the noun "stalwart" was first employed by Blaine in 1877 to designate a certain class of Republican politicians. The word was used in the *Academy*, Jan. 3rd, 1891, in the sense in which I have employed it in this appendix, as may be seen by the following quotation. "His opinion is not favourable. Emin's stalwarts, whose praises had been so loudly trumpeted in Europe, proving to be for the most part brutal ruffians and abject cravens in the presence of danger."

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otoko wo lateru, acting the man, against oppressors of the weak. It is used synonymously with *Edokko*, thus showing that the *otokodate*, strictly so called, first came into existence in the Shōgun's capital. They were a product of the state of society which existed in the early decades of the seventeenth century. They represented an attempt on the part of the oppressed classes to defend themselves against the professional warriors, that is, an attempt to meet force with force. The *samurai* of those days carried things with a high hand, acting on the principle that might is right. Though Ieyasu succeeded in crushing the spirit out of many of the *daimyō* by the restrictions to which he subjected them, their followers still retained their swash-buckler ways. Many were the disturbances that occurred among the *katamoto*.* Their demeanour to the lower orders was that of superiors to inferiors and was marked by violence and injustice. The main object of the *otokodate* at first was to right certain wrongs from which the lower orders and trades-people especially suffered. But it was not long before they frequently went beyond the *samurai* in unreasonableness of conduct and eccentricity. They were a queer mixture good and evil. As an order they quickly degenerated,

* For an account of these warriors *vide* Appendix to Tale VII in volume.

but down even to the Meiji era there were individual *otokodate* who won the respect of all classes of society.

The mental qualities and general character of the *otokodate* or *Edokko* may be thus summarized: He delighted in physical strength and in its exercise in defence of the weak and the oppressed or in redressing the grievances of peace-loving citizens. Once having decided on a course, the *otokodate* objected to give way to anybody or anything, even though his action might mean death to himself. His strength of will was astonishing. To him no shame was so great as the shame of defeat or failure to fulfil a purpose, whether that purpose was great or small. He was averse to uttering falsehoods under any pretence whatever, and was an advocate of candour and outspokenness on all occasions. When once embarked on an enterprise, the amount of hardship he was prepared to undergo was marvellous. But he made no distinction between great things and small, between worthy objects and unworthy ones, therefore he soon became a veritable pest to society, with his boastful language, his extreme violence and quarrelsome ways. The term *Edokko* is now too often used as an epithet of reproach, and such lines as:—*Edokko wa go-gwatsu no koi no fuki-nagashi; kuchi-saki bakari, harawata wa nashi*; “The Edoites are like the carp which in the month of May are carried

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the stream by the force of the wind; all mouth,
good inside," well express the contempt in
these stalwarts are held by the general public.
They make a boast of being spendthrifts, getting rid of
day's earnings within the day—*yoigoshi no zeni wa*
ikawazu; "To use no money earned the day before."
saying of theirs expresses the same sentiment.
no umare-sokonai, kura wo tate; "The Edoite
becomes rich enough to erect a godown went wrong
h [was not born a true Edoite]." They preach a
of improvidence, which seems to find a response
not only in the minds of the lower classes but in the
sentiments of certain highly educated men. The late
Mr. Fukuchi Genichirō, a very eminent journalist, was one
of the latter. Mr. Toyabe Shuntei describes him in
the *Taiyō* thus:—*Edokko kishitsu de, yoigoshi no shimpai*
nado ni kuttaku suru hō de nai; "He had the true spirit
of an Edoite; he was not one to concern himself about
the morrow."

On the unruliness and eccentricities of the *otokodate*
much has been written. Some of them were in the habit
going to an inn, with swords in their belts, eating and
nking whatever they could lay hands on, and leaving
thout paying or giving a promise of subsequent payment,
they had no money, or throwing a handful of coins

at the innkeeper when they had any, scorning the notion of taking change and threatening the man with instant death who dared to insult them by offering it. The airs they put on knew no bounds, and they valued the obeisance and cringing servility of the lower orders more than their own lives. In order to harden themselves, they purposely partook of the most unsavoury dishes. Among these were mole-soup, minced pickled frogs, chopped salted worms, centipede soup and grilled rats. In summer they would close up their rooms, put on wool-lined garments, sit beside large charcoal fires and eat hot things. In winter they went about in their summer clothes and threw open their houses. Their affectations were numerous. They objected to pronounce long words or utter tedious phrases. So *namida*, tears, became in their mouths *nada*; *koto de aru*, *koto de* or *konda*; *buchi-kakeru*, *bukkakeru*; *berabōme-shakai*, *beramme-shakai*.

In the time of Tokugawa Tsunayoshi, on August 8th, 1687, an order was issued suppressing the *otokodate*. Both *samurai* and plebeians were forbidden to play the rôle of stalwarts under penalty of death. In one month some 200 *otokodate* were arrested for disobeying this order, 37 of whom were beheaded. But this persecution of the order did not last long. Tsunayoshi lost interest in political affairs and nobody took the trouble to suppress

[illegible]

* This page has the same text as the previous page. * *Shelley's poem*

He respects his superiors. He is specially kind to the old. He treats upright men in a very superior manner. No task appears to baffle him. He will attempt what others have declared to be impossible of attainment. To an enemy he shows no leniency and gives no quarter."

In the *Edo-masago* (江戸真砂) we read that one of the chief objects in the establishment of the *otokodate* order was the preservation in time of peace of the manly qualities of the *samurai* class. The *otokodate* were fond of white sword hilts, and hence a band of these stalwarts received the name of the *Shira-tsuka-gumi*. Three famous *hatamoto*, Mizuno Jūrozaemon, Ikeda Kambei and Kondō Noboru were all *otokodate*. Bands of *otokodate* were known under many names. There was the Daishō no Jingi-gumi, whose headquarters were in Oka-machi, Shitaya, and the Tōken-gumi, and a number of other bands; some of them consisting of 60 or 70 members and others of only 14 or 15. The *otokodate* were fond of long swords and daggers, but wore short coats reaching to the knees only, like the Scotch Highland costume. Their sleeves did not extend beyond the elbows. Their daggers were over 2 feet in length. The *otokodate* eventually became so troublesome that low-rank *hatamoto* (those receiving under 1,000 *koku*) were commanded by the Shōgun to keep them in order. These *hatamoto* at one time went about

with big clubs, which they flourished vigorously, and so were known as *bōfuri*, a word that was used in a double sense as stick-flourishers and mosquito-larvæ. It happened once that in an affray between the Konya-chō *otokodate* and the *hatamoto*, the latter got a fearful mauling, and so the victorious band received the name of the *Akingyo-gumi*, the gold-fish band, since *bōfuri*, mosquito-larvæ are devoured by gold-fish.

It happened shortly after this that a very powerful man called Nakayama Kageyu was created a *Tōsoku-bugyō* (Controller of Highwaymen) and he made great raids on the *otokodate*, killing a number of them."

The most noted of all the *otokodate* was a man who was killed by the famous *hatamoto otokodate* Mizuno Jurozaemon on April 13th, 1651, at the age of 36. He was known as Banzui-in Chōbei, being a son of the gate-keeper of a temple called the Banzui-in, in Asakusa. His wonderful bodily strength and his sharpness of wits developed very early, and he began as a mere lad to study fencing and that form of wrestling known as *jūjutsu*,* and in both arts he soon became wonderfully proficient. The stalwarts of this period were a gambling set, and Chōbei enjoyed this pastime as much as anybody and, at the age

* *Vide* the introduction to Tale III, p 16, *et seq.*

of 25, was honoured with the title of *Bakuchi-uchi no oyakata* (Head of Gamblers). These were days when the *Otokodate* rage was at its height. There were bands composed of plebeian roughs, bands composed of *samurai* and bands composed of townsmen (*machi-yakko*). There was the Roppa-gumi, the Daijingi-gumi and the Shōjingi-gumi, and then there was the famous *hatamoto* band led by Mizuno Jūrozaemon, called the Shira-tsuka-gumi. Chōbei was at the head of what was known as the Asakusa-gumi, having under him about 100 picked stalwarts, among whom Tōken Gombei, Hanaregoma Yoshirō and Satsuma Gengorō were the most noted. At that time there was no *otokodate* living who was a match for Chōbei. His great rival was the head of the *hatamoto* stalwarts, Mizuno Jūrozaemon (1,500 *koku*), who was backed by powerful followers, Sakabe Sanjūrō (5,000 *koku*), Kagatsume Kaino-Kami (5,000 *koku*), and some others. This band, notwithstanding the fact that they assumed a title implying that they were backed by the Shōgun (Kubō no Shiri-oshi*) were a more lawless and a more rowdy set than those composing Chōbei's band. Between the two bands the citizens of Edo had a pretty hard time of it. Conflicts were of daily occurrence. Mizuno was very

* *Ushiro de Kubō ga tasukeru.*

anxious to crush his rival. He first thought of putting him to shame in an open manner, but he discovered that he was no match for Chōbei in fighting. They crossed each other's path one day at Shiba. The circumstances were these. A number of Mizuno's men had defeated a band of *machi-yakko*, when Chōbei and his men arrived on the scene. Chōbei rushed at Mizuno's men and, seizing them one after the other, hurled them to the ground in such a terribly alarming manner that Mizuno was utterly cowed by the sight and stealthily made off without striking a blow. The report of this affair soon spread all over Edo and consequently Mizuno was sneered at as he passed through the streets. When this result of his action was reported to Chōbei, the noble generosity of his nature at once asserted itself, and he spoke thus to his followers:—"What I did at Shiba was only done with the object of putting a stop to the violent ways of Mizuno's band. I should be sorry indeed if on account of the disparaging report that is going about an illustrious *hakamoto's* income were cut down. So when you hear people talking about this, just say, will you, that they have got hold of the wrong story, that it was somebody else whom we drubbed on that occasion."

But Mizuno's chagrin was great, and he determined to take the life of his foe by some stratagem or other.

He sent a messenger to Chōbei, instructing him to praise the prowess and strength of the great *otokodate* and to say that Mizuno's admiration for his gallantry was so great that he desired to be on friendly terms with him. Would not Chōbei come over and dine with the head of the Shiratsuka-gumi? Against the advice of all his followers, Chōbei accepted the invitation. He was urged at any rate to go attended. But he said that this would look cowardly. He knew that his life was in danger, but he would take his chance and go alone. After being handsomely entertained, he was asked to take a bath, the intention evidently being to attack him when in the bath with no means of defending himself. But he declined. Whereupon one of Mizuno's men threw a hot *sake-chōshi** at his head, striking him in the forehead. This enraged Chōbei. He instantly drew his sword and cut down three men in a few seconds, and would have been a match for half a dozen more had he not fallen a victim to Mizuno's base treachery. When Chōbei was holding his own magnificently against his foes, with his back to a sliding screen (*fusuma*), Mizuno suddenly drew aside the screen and thrust his sword into Chōbei's back before the latter was aware of his danger. He was then attacked on all sides

* A metal vessel from which *sake* is poured into drinking cups.

and killed on the spot. Thus in the prime of manhood died the greatest of all the *otokodate* whose names have come down to us, leaving behind him a reputation for magnanimity, kindness and noble feeling, and a number of daring disciples, bent on avenging his death.

Mizuno Jūrozaemon, the founder and the head of the Shiratsuka-gumi *otokodate* was the son of Mizuno Settsu-no-Kami. As a lad he was self-willed and quarrelsome. His young imagination was fired by the tales of bloodshed and bitter strife recounted by his father and the warriors who associated with him. With his strength and years his love of violence increased. His chief merit, if merit it can be called, seems to have been the practising of all the austerities of *otokodate* in the matter of food, clothing and domicile. But he and his band acted in a most lawless manner, attacking peaceable citizens on the slightest provocation. The only wonder is that as a *hatamoto* he was allowed so much liberty prior to his attack on Chōbei. In killing this idol of the Edo community Mizuno sealed his own fate. Chōbei's disciples were constantly on the look-out for an opportunity to take the head of their master' murderer. For over a month Mizuno never ventured to leave his house. But on the 35th day after the death of Chōbei he went to the

Yoshiwara* on horseback, with a number of followers. He spent the night there. In the morning while on his way back to his house he was attacked by Tōken Gombei, one of Chōbei's disciples, and ten of his followers. Mizuno escaped, but all his attendants were severely punished. They returned home earless and noseless and covered with wounds. The news of Mizuno's ignominious flight and his previous mean treachery towards Chōbei reached the Shōgun's ears and Mizuno was ordered to commit suicide, and his followers were all banished.

Subsequent to this the bands of *otokodate* known as *machi-yakko* were exterminated in the most horribly cruel manner by the above-mentioned Nakagawa Kageyu. They were first arrested by the hundred, simply on suspicion, many of the suspects were not *otokodate* at all. But they were all tortured, and many were subsequently executed.

It is related that a very noted *otokodate* called Kinkamban Jinkurō, during the *Hōreki* era (1751—1764) was once appealed to by a robber who had been arrested by the authorities for theft. The robber said that he had a mother entirely dependent on him and that his arrest

* The part of the city where most of the houses of ill-fame are situated. For a history of prostitution in Japan, *vide* De Becker's *Nightless City*.

would leave her without means of support. Touched by the story, Jinkurō not only released the burglar, but gave him 30 *ryō* and a suit of clothes. Jinkurō then confessed what he had done to the authorities and went to prison in the robber's stead. Subsequently the latter turned up and pleaded for the release of Jinkurō, offering to go to gaol in his stead. But Jinkurō was of no mind to accept the offer. He told the officers in charge of him that his reputation as an *otokodate* would suffer were he not to bear without a murmur all the trouble that his kindness to a filial-minded robber involved. So he served out his sentence, and when discharged went to his home with the glad heart of a man who is conscious that he has acted generously.



JAPAN IN DAYS OF YORE.

VII.

THE TRIUMPH OF RIGHT OVER MIGHT.

CHAPTER I.

IN the time of Tokugawa Iemitsu, among the councillors of the Tsugaru Baron, Etchū-no-Kami, there was a man called Matsumae Gorozaemon. Gorozaemon had a son called Gorobei, who, being an only child, was very much petted by his parents.

While the boy was still young his mother died, and his father soon after married another woman. This woman, whose name was Nao, had a daughter by a previous husband, whom she brought with her to live in Gorōzaemon's house.

When her own child grew big, she treated Gorobei very cruelly. Gorozaemon, seeing this, kept thinking how bad it would be for his son after his (Gorozaemon's) death, with such an unkind woman as a step-mother.

When the boy had grown up his father was taken ill. Among Gorozaemon's servants there was a man called Kisaki Bumbei. Bumbei was honest and faithful.

Much concerned about his master's state of health, he came to inquire after him from time to time. One day, when Bumbei had finished his usual inquiries, Gorozaemon told him of his apprehensions in reference to his wife's conduct after his death, and requested him to do his best to help his son Gorobei to obtain what was his due.

"This duty I will undertake," replied Bumbei, "and will perform even though it may cost me my life. But it is a delicate matter; concerning as it does members of your family. I should like to have something in writing to show that I am intrusted with power to act on your behalf."

The following document was then drawn up and handed to Bumbei:—

"Know all Men by these Presents that I, Matsumae Gorozaemon, of Tsugaru, Mutsu, do hereby make it known that I have serious doubts whether my wife Nao, owing to the perversity of her mind, will make my son Gorobei the heir to my estates. I do therefore empower Kisiaki Bumbei to act on my behalf, and do charge him to see to it that my son is not robbed of what is bequeathed to him. When the said Nao's daughter is married, it is my wish that a dowry of a thousand *ryō* be given to her. These two matters I entrust to the said Kisiaki Bumbei, and specially request that they be attended to

•

with scrupulousness. In witness whereof, I the said Matsumae Gorozaemon, of Tsugaru, Mutsu, hereunto set my hand and seal the—day of the—month of the—year of Kwanei" (1634-1644).

This document Bumbei took and solemnly promised to carry out.

Not long after this Gorozaemon died. And, as he had anticipated, soon after his decease Nao commenced to persecute her step-son. She dismissed Bumbei from her service; and then represented to the local authorities that Gorobei had acted in a most unfilial manner towards her. Through bribery she succeeded in inducing the local officers to order his expulsion from her house.

Gorobei went to Edo. He set up a rice shop in Kuramae, Asakusa. The dealings of the ordinary Edo shopkeepers of that time were full of tricks of the trade, but Gorobei acted in an honest way, which gave him a good reputation among his customers. These recommended others to go to his shop, so that by degrees Gorobei made money and was able to marry. After while a son was born to him, whom he named Gosuke

One day Gorobei said to himself:—"Alas! I have gone down in the world. Born the son of a councillor, I am not pursuing the kind of life my father would have wished had he been alive, but there is no help for

it. I must go on as I am for the present. I should like, however, to bring my son up to be a brave *samurai*, and to retrieve by means of him the honour which I have had the misfortune to lose."

He prepared therefore at the back of his house a fencing yard, in which he gave his son and a few other lads instruction in fencing day by day.

Not far from Gorobei's house there lived a *kitsumoto** called Naitō Tōemon, who also gave lessons in fencing. Among his pupils there were two youths called Fujita Takumi and Kondō Tanomō. When they heard that Gorobei was teaching fencing so near their master's fencing yard they were very angry.

"Not far from here," said one of these youths to Tōemon, one day, "there is a shopkeeper who has the impudence to set himself up as a teacher of fencing. What fun it would be to bring the fellow here and have a turn with him! Of course he cannot fence, townsman† that he is."

"It is very foolish of you to talk in that way," replied Tōemon. "In a great place like Edo there is

* For a short account of these vassals of the Tokugawa Shōguns *vide* Appendix.

† The term is used in a supercilious sense to indicate a business man who is unacquainted with military art—a mere ordinary citizen is the meaning conveyed.

no saying who is who. Suppose the man is a better fencer than either of you, and you get beaten; what then? If, on the other hand, he is an ordinary townsman, then you will of course come off victors. But what credit is there in beating a man who cannot fence at all?"

The two wild young fellows paid no attention to this advice of their teacher. "It may be that you are afraid of this Gorobei that you speak thus," was the only reply they made.

Riled by this remark, Tōemon gave his consent to their summoning Gorobei. The two youths went at once and fetched him. They did not tell Gorobei for what purpose they wished him to come to the *hatamoto's* house. So he was surprised enough when, on his arrival there, one of them said:—"We hear you have been teaching fencing at your place. It is somewhat a rare occurrence for a townsman to be instructing people in sword exercise; so we thought we should like to have a bout with you just to see what you can do in this line?"

Whereupon Gorobei, excusing himself, replied:—"I do not set myself up as an instructor in sword exercise. I began by teaching my son only, but gradually a few friends asked to join him. I know very little of the art, and I do not wish to fence with people who have been properly instructed."

The two young men were not to be put off: they insisted on his fencing. So, as there was no help for it, Gorobei took a fencing sword and commenced. Neither of the young men could stand before him, for he was a good fencer, and they but novices.

Tōemon, who had been watching the encounter, seeing that his disciples were defeated, grew furious, and, taking a sword, rushed at Gorobei, intending to kill him on the spot. Gorobei begged him to desist, but Tōemon paid no attention to his entreaties. So Gorobei drew his sword and adroitly defended himself against the wild slashes of the *katamoto*, and, watching his chance, made his escape from the house.

After Gorobei had gone, Tōemon and his two disciples conferred together about what had happened, and they agreed that if Gorobei were not killed the incident would be regarded as a blot on their honour. So they decided that they would bring about his death by some means or other.

Tōemon went to one of the *Bugyō*, or Mayors of Edo, Harai Iyo-no-Kami, who was his father-in-law, and informed him of what had occurred. "And," said he, "as we shall concoct something that will be brought before you for judgment, we beg that you will so arrange matters that we may succeed in accomplishing our purpose."

At first the Mayor refused to do anything for him, saying that it was not for a public officer to act in the way Tōemon wished: but subsequently he thought that if he refused Tōemon's request, it might bring trouble on his daughter, so he promised to further Tōemon plans as far as lay in his power.

The method Tōemon adopted to get Gorobei into trouble was as follows:—He called three of his most trusted retainers and told them to cut their bodies in several places, and then to run in haste to the Mayor's gate and say that they had met a man called Matsumae Gorobei in the street, who had, without any provocation from them, commenced to quarrel and fight with them. They were then to show their wounds and say that they might have killed Gorobei had they not feared being reprimanded by the authorities for killing a man without an adequate cause. They had come to appeal to the Mayor for help. All this was carried out. And the Mayor sent at once and had Gorobei arrested. Gorobei of course denied the charges that were brought against him, and, even though subjected to torture, for some time refused to say what he knew to be false. But subsequently, fearing that if he did not pretend to be guilty his son would also be arrested and tortured, he

acknowledged that he had acted as the three men had represented. For this he was condemned to death.

Not far from Nihonbashi there lived at this time an *otokodate** who, from the whole-hearted way in which he assisted all those who were in distress, had prefixed to his name Tasuke the word *Isshin*, and so was called Isshin Tasuke, the "Whole-hearted Tasuke."

Tasuke was originally one of the retainers of the famous Ōkubo Hikozaemon. Being a man of great honesty and intelligence, he was a favourite with his master. One day Hikozaemon called Tasuke and told him that he was very sorry to have to part with him, but really he had not the wherewithal to reward his faithful services. "Wherever you go, however," said Hikozaemon "there is no fear of your not getting employment. You can easily make five hundred or a thousand *koku* a year; so, take this fifty *ryō* and go and serve some rich baron who can afford to give you a good equivalent for your work."

"I am much obliged to you for your kind offer," replied Tasuke, "but, as I have been in your service so long, I prefer to remain with you. I am quite satisfied with my present position. I respectfully decline to accept the offer you make."

* For a full account of these stalwarts *vide* Appendix to Tale VI.

"What I have said to you now," replied Hikozaemon, "I have said for your benefit. It is not to your interest to remain with me any longer." Here he pressed on Tasuke the advisability of his taking the money.

Thus urged, Tasuke took the fifty *ryō* and became a hawker of fish. When on his rounds selling fish, he sought out the persecuted and the oppressed, whom he invariably assisted to the utmost of his power.

Soon after the events related above, Tasuke, on reaching the house of Gorobei, one day, found the family in a great state of distress. On inquiring the cause of this, all that had happened was related to him. "I will rescue Gorobei," said he at once, and off he went with his fish to the house of Hikozaemon.

As Tasuke approached the entrance to his old master's courtyard, one of Hikozaemon's servants thus accosted him. "Well, Tasuke, any nice fish to-day?"

"I have two fine fresh *tai** here," replied Tasuke, "but they are too good for such low class gentlefolk as your master—fish a little bit gone is quit good enough for the like of him."

"You impudent fellow!" exclaimed the servant. "What do you mean?—and you an old servant of the master's too—I will run you through with my sword."

* A species of sea-bream.

Hikozaemon, who happened to be near, overheard the conversation and interposed:—“Well, you are an insolent fellow, Tasuke, speaking of me in that way! What do you mean by it?”

“Pardon my rudeness,” replied Tasuke, bowing to the ground. “I wanted to see you in a hurry; and I knew that a man occupying the station I now do, could not effect this in any ordinary way, so I adopted the plan of pretending to abuse you.”

“Ha! ha! ha!—this is a stratagem of yours, then, is it?” exclaimed Hikozaemon, laughing heartily. “Well, well! from an old servant like you there is nothing to be offended at in this. Come in, come in. Let me hear what you want.” Tasuke entered and related the whole history of what had occurred.

“This is a difficult matter,” remarked Hikozaemon. “The man himself has confessed his guilt. Were I younger I might attempt something, but I am now over seventy years of age, and I fear I should not succeed in such a complicated business as this.”

“Then there is no help for it”; said Tasuke, taking his fish knife and preparing to commit suicide.

“Hold, hold!” exclaimed Hikozaemon, seizing his hand. “What has taken you?”

"Let me alone," said Tasuke, "die I will. Tasuke is not the man to break his word. He has promised to help Gorobei, and do it he will—or perish."*

"I am an old man;" replied Hikozaemon, "and have not the energy that I once had for undertaking new enterprises. But old as I am, I cannot refuse my aid in a cause which affects you so deeply. Set your mind at ease. I will do my best to help you."

The first thing that Hikozaemon did was to obtain a respite for Gorobei. This he effected by applying to the Shōgun, with whom he was on the most intimate terms. He next commissioned Tasuke to search for some satisfactory evidence by which to overthrow or reverse the decision of the Mayor.

A few days after his interview with Hikozaemon, Tasuke, in going his rounds with his fish basket, went to the house of Tōemon, and, in the course of conversation with one of the servants, remarked that he had been ill.

"Indeed!" replied the servant; "and we have sickness here too. Three of our fellows were attacked by one Matsumae Gorobei the other day, and got badly wounded: here they are lying inside the screen."

* In these days men committed suicide rather than suffer any dishonour.

"Oh dear!" exclaimed Tasuke! "I am extremely sorry to hear this. I regret that I have nothing better to offer, but please accept these fish for the invalids," hauling out two or three fish from his basket as he said it. He then fetched about six quarts of *sake* and presented it to them. He set to and cooked the fish himself and, after placing everything ready for their meal and giving injunctions to the invalids to take great care of themselves, he went away. He did not go far, however: he hid near the room, where he could overhear everything that was going on.

No sooner had Tasuke gone than the three men who had been playing the invalid jumped out of their beds and said:—"This *otokodate* Tasuke is a fine fellow and no mistake!—giving away the things by which he gets his living, and buying *sake* for us in the bargain!—Come, come! let us have a drink together." Whereupon they commenced to drink and make a great noise.

In the midst of the hubbub, Tasuke suddenly reappeared. "Excuse me," said he, as he opened the sliding door and re-entered the room.

"Tasuke has come back! Tasuke has come back!" exclaimed the men as they heard him approaching, and, throwing down their *sake* cups, they rushed for their beds. There was a dragging of quilts and a scrambling for

pillows, and sundry attempts at arranging the screen. Before they could get straight, Tasuke was in their midst. In their flurry they had left signs enough of what had been going on; one man in his confusion had forgotten to cover his feet, which were projecting from under the clothes; and the others were disarranged in various ways.

Tasuke hardly knew how to keep from laughing, but he pretended to be astonished. "You fellows have been feigning sickness. You might carry on like this with a stranger, but I wonder you do it with an old acquaintance like Tasuke. You ought to know him well enough by this time to tell him just how matters stand, instead of making a fool of him in this way."

Here they whispered to each other:—"We had better tell him just how things are. It can do no harm to tell a man like Tasuke."

So one of them commenced:—"Really, Tasuke, we ought to be ashamed of ourselves for acting in this way. But, to tell you the truth, master has given us fifteen *ryō* each to pretend to be wounded badly, in order to bring about the death of Matsumae Gorobei. When he is killed we are to have another fifteen each. When that takes place we will feast you, Tasuke, so don't say a word about it, old chap."

"Ah, you are lucky fellows!" said Tasuke, and left the house.

He now went to the *sake* shop and, drawing up the form of a receipt for the amount of liquor purchased, made the owner of the shop affix his seal to the same. It ran as follows:—"Received the under-mentioned sum of sixteen *sen* six *rin* from Isshin Tasuke for five *shō* of *sake*, to be presented to certain sick persons in the *nagaya* of Naitō Tōemon."

"You can fetch the empty tubs from the *nagaya*," said Tasuke. In great glee he now hastened to Hikozaemon's house and related to him all that had happened.

Hikozaemon reported the incident to the Shōgun, and the Shōgun immediately ordered that the case should be reconsidered by the Mayor, Harai Iyo-no-Kami who, in accordance with the custom of those days acted as one of the Chief-Magistrates of the city.

Such a proceeding being of rare occurrence, and the persons concerned being well known, on the day appointed for the rehearing of the case, the court was crowded to overflowing, all the elite of Edo, and even the Shōgun himself, being present on the occasion.

The trial opened by the Magistrate's informing Gorobei that as fresh evidence bearing on his case had been obtained, the case would be reconsidered. Tasuke, being

the chief witness, was the first to be called. On his entering the court, the audience bent forward, anxious to see what kind of a man he was who had been bold enough to declare that he would overturn the decision of the Chief-Magistrate of the Shōgun's capital.

"You are said to be acquainted with the details of the affray between Gorobei and the retainers of Tōemon," commenced the Magistrate; "please give an account of the same."

"Certainly;" replied Tasuke, "I will do so. But, being a man of low rank, I am not acquainted with language that it is proper to use to such great personages as are here to-day. It may be that in my ignorance I shall say some things that will sound impolite. If such is the case, your Honour will kindly pardon it."

These words were no sooner out of Tasuke's lips, than his countenance changed, and, looking fiercely at the Magistrate, he said:—"Gorobei is a man whom I know very well. He is not the kind of person to quarrel with any one. The night on which he is said to have attacked Tōemon's men, he was engaged with his accounts up to twelve o'clock; whereas the affray was said to have taken place at ten o'clock. Therefore the tale of Tōemon's followers is manifestly false."

Here, looking angrily at Tasuke, Iyo-no-Kami asked:—"Has not Gorobei confessed to having done that of which he is accused, and has he not put his seal to the confession?"

"Notwithstanding this," replied Tasuke, "I am prepared to show that he did not do that of which he is accused. Here are the accounts that he was making up that very night, which you can see for yourself. If this evidence suffices, well and good: if not, I have other, but the production of it would cause a great many people trouble and inconvenience, so that provided the case can be settled without it, I prefer not to produce it."

When the Magistrate heard Tasuke speak of trouble being caused, he looked for a moment as though a nail had been driven into him, but recollecting where he was and that he was exposed to the gaze of many eyes, the feeling was not allowed to manifest itself in the expression of his countenance for more than an instant.

"Never mind that. Let us have the evidence," said the Magistrate.

Tasuke commenced with the account of the fencing bout and gave a minute statement of all that happened after. In the course of his evidence, just as he was approaching the subject of Iyo-no-Kami and Tōemon's

relationship to each other, he commenced:—"Tōemon and Iyo-no-Kami—" when he was suddenly interrupted.

"Be silent," exclaimed the Magistrate. "This is the public court; and I am the Judge. How dare you speak of me as Iyo-no-Kami?"

Did I not say," replied Tasuke, "Just now that I should most probably speak impolitely? Very well, then, I will say that on account of Mr. Tōemon being a relation of Mr. Iyo-no-Kami—"

"What—again? You rude fellow!" exclaimed the Magistrate. "Why do you mention my name in this court? The trial concerns you and Gorobei, but not me. What business, then, have you to be talking about me?"

Here Matsudaira Nobutsuna, with a loud voice, interposed:—"Iyo-no-Kami! give place. This trial will be conducted by the other Magistrate, Hizen-no-Kami."

Iyo-no-Kami retired, and the new judge occupied his seat. Hizen-no-Kami encouraged Tasuke to say all that he knew about the case. As Tasuke was giving his evidence, Iyo-no-Kami's face constantly changed colour: now it was white, and now red.

When the three men who had feigned to be ill came up to be examined, they affirmed that they did not know Tasuke in the least; and that they had not taken the *sake*. Whereupon Tasuke produced the receipt for

the latter, and suggested that the men's bodies should be examined. It was found that they had no marks of the wounds left anywhere on them. The three men, seeing that it was useless to try and conceal the truth any longer, confessed the plot.

Hizen-no-Kami ordered them to be shackled; and Toemon and his two disciples to be sent to prison.

Iyo-no-Kami was degraded from office and placed in the charge of a *hatamoto*, pending further inquiry into the part he had taken in the plot.

Gorobei was acquitted. Before he was released, however, another charge was brought against him, which had been previously concocted by Iyo-no-Kami, who, on hearing that Tasuke purposed overturning his decision, thought that it was just possible that his dishonesty would come to light and in that case Gorobei would be set free. This, out of sheer enmity, he was desirous of preventing. So he had previously sent a man to search Gorobei's store house to find something whereby he might accuse him. There he found a box containing two suits of armor and two documents. One was written by the command of Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and the other by the command of Tokugawa Ieyasu. In the former there was mention made of the granting of land yielding two thousand koku a year to Gorobei's father for personal merit

The man who found these copied them word for word, and took the copies to Iyo-no-Kami. "Ah," said he, "a townsman like Gorobei never obtained these by fair means. He has doubtless stolen them."

Accordingly, the charge of having in his possession articles which could not possibly belong to him was brought against Gorobei, and the case came up for hearing just as he was declared innocent of the former charge. When the character of the articles found was stated, Hizen-no-Kami asked Gorobei how he came by them. Gorobei made no reply.

"Come!" said the judge, "this is quite another matter from what we have been considering. Here are documents from no less personages than Ieyasu and Hideyoshi. If these have been stolen, your guilt is very great."

"I cannot tell you anything about them," replied Gorobei.

Tasuke now went to Gorobei and said:—"If you do not give information about these things, all that Hikozaemon and I have accomplished so far will be rendered fruitless. How did you come by them? Were they bought? Or did you get them as security for money lent? Or did you steal them?"

"I cannot tell you anything about them;" persisted Gorobei.

So, as they could get no evidence out of him, Gorobei was sent back to prison.

On his way to the prison, by the connivance of the officer in charge, Tasuke was allowed to converse with Gorobei. "It may be all very well for you," said Tasuke, "to conceal the history of these articles, but if no information is given about them, then all that Hikozaemon has done will be of no use. And you must remember that Hikozaemon is not a relation of yours or a man on whom you have any claim. He took up your case because I asked him to do so; and now if you are condemned on account of this new affair, he will be ashamed of having espoused your cause. Surely this is not the way to treat a man who has befriended you."

"Well then," said Gorobei, "I will tell you; but remember you are to keep the matter to yourself. One of the suits of armour was used by my father and came into my possession at his death. It has three bullet holes in it. The other was bought for my use by my father. As regards the documents, the one from Teyotom Hideyoshi was given to my father for having led a thousand troops in the forefront of the battle in the Ōshi war. The second document was drawn up by command of Tokugawa Ieyasu, and simply affirms that the statements made in the first are correct." He afterwards gave Tasuke


other information. "And," said he, "a man called Kisaki Bunbei is well acquainted with the history of my past life. "But," he added, "I do not wish my family affairs made public. My reason for not revealing them in the court was that I was loath to expose the folly and perversity of my step-mother; for, in doing this, I should have been indirectly exposing my father's mistake in marrying such a woman; and not this only, but the injustice of the officer who turned me out of my father's house, and, through him, the negligence of the Lord of Tsugaru in allowing such an unprincipled officer to remain in power. Rather than bring trouble on so many people, I will quietly suffer the penalty the court is pleased to impose."


Tasuke could not contain himself for joy at these disclosures. He danced about like a boy. And, after telling Gorobei not to be discouraged and urging him to take good care of his health, he rushed off to Hikozaemon and related to him all that he had heard.

When Tasuke arrived, Hikozaemon was feeling very much disheartened by the failure of his efforts to release Gorobei; and so the news brought was most welcome to him. Hikozaemon ordered Tasuke to go to Tsugaru and find out everything that he could about Gorobei's past history, so that they might have materials for

showing that the fresh charges brought against him were as groundless as the former ones. Thinking it possible that Tasuke might be waylaid on the road, he ordered two expert swordsmen to accompany him.

In the meantime, Hikozaemon sent to Hizen-no-Kami, informing him how things stood, and stating that evidence was being collected, which would be produced before very long. Whereupon Hizen-no-Kami ordered that Gorobei's case stand over.






CHAPTER II.

While the events related in the last chapter were taking place another plot against Gorobei was being concocted. Tōemon's son, Tōjūrō, and Takumi's son, Genshirō, were talking over what had happened just after the trial was concluded. "If," said they, "Tasuke proves that the armour is Gorobei's property, then we are done for. Let us go to the store-house at night and burn the armour, and give out that Gorobei's wife burnt it to save her husband from being convicted of theft."

The night before Tasuke left for Tsugaru, he went to Gorobei's house to bid farewell to Gorobei's wife. As he was going out of the house, he noticed a light in the godown. He examined the building and found that a hole had been cut in it. So he at once knew that there were thieves inside. Taking a mat, he stopped the hole through which the men had entered, and ran quickly to call for help. In a very few minutes, the store-house was surrounded by the neighbours and, while they kept guard, Tasuke went to Hizen-no-Kami and obtained thirty constables to arrest the thieves.



No one cared to be the first to enter the godown, not knowing how many men were inside nor how desperate they might be. Tasuke came forward and, saying:—"Since I was the first to discover these rogues, I may as well be the first to arrest them," entered the building. He could not find any one inside for a while, but, after searching for some time in the upper part of the building, he caught sight of a long box from which there projected a little bit of a man's coat. This box he opened, and out sprang two men, who immediately drew their swords and attacked Tasuke. Tasuke had nothing more than a stick in his hands, but with this he warded off the blows of his assailants, and kept them at bay till the constables came up and arrested them.

The two young men were taken off to Hizen-no-Kami. On their arrival at his house, he inquired of the officer that had charge of them what kind of men they were. Did they seem to be peasants, were they townsmen, or did they belong to the better class people?

"They are no peasants," said the officer. "From what I hear, they are no other than Tōemon's son, Tojūro, and a companion of his, Fujita Genshirō."

The Magistrate, after ascertaining that such was the case, gave directions that they should both be poisoned. His reason for acting thus was that he did not wish the

name of *katamoto* to be disgraced by the disclosures which at a public trial would certainly have been made. He thought too that for the sake of the families to which the two men belonged, it was preferable to conceal from the public the nature of their crime, and to let it be known only that they had died in prison.

Hizen-no-Kami now had Gorobei called, and he inquired of him whether what he had disclosed to Tasuke in reference to the two sets of armour, the documents and his family was correct.

Gorobei, after giving his reasons for revealing the same, said that there was no mistake whatever about it.

The Magistrate now despatched a letter to Etchū-no-Kami, the Baron of Tsugaru, requesting him to send down to Edo Gorobei's step-mother Nao, her daughter, and son-in-law (for, though we have not mentioned the fact, son-in-law she had), and informing him of the interest that even the Shōgun was taking in Gorobei's case.

In due time the party arrived in Edo, and they and Gorobei confronted each other for the first time in the Court of Justice on the occasion of an official inquiry conducted before the Shōgun and most of the chief officers of the city and numerous barons.* "Now," said

* Many of the trials of these days were full of the most romantic incidents and revelations. Hence the great interest evoked and the large attendance.

the Magistrate to Gorobei, "repeat the statement you made to me a little time ago in the presence of your relations."

Gorobei hesitated a little, feeling that it would be unfilial of him to act towards his mother in the way he was commanded to do; but, on being pressed by the Magistrate, he consented. After he had finished, the Magistrate asked Nao whether what he had said was correct. She affirmed that it was not. "And," said she, "Gorobei is a very bad man. His father knew that he was not fit to succeed to his estates, so, before his death he asked me to look out for a good husband for my daughter and to make her husband the heir of his estates. Of this I have evidence in the form of a document left by Gorozaemon."

Here she produced a paper, which the Magistrate took and showed to Etchū-no-Kami, who was present on the occasion. On being asked whether the writing was Gorozaemon's or not, Etchū-no-Kami affirmed that it was.

"Then you have been deceiving us;" said the Magistrate to Gorobei.

Gorobei, as the reader will have gathered from what has been already said, was extremely weak in disposition; and his many reverses, coming one after another, had made him think that some cruel fate, from which it

was useless to try to escape, was pursuing him: for as soon as he got free from one charge, was not another brought up? He despaired of saving his life, and therefore now, when thus addressed by Hizen-no-Kami, simply bowed his head and said:—"I have no excuse to offer for my conduct."

The usual document was drawn up, and Gorobei's finger, after having been dipped into the ink, was stretched out ready for sealing the confession,—and so sealing his fate, which was death by decapitation—when a voice from one of the audience was heard—"Wait, wait! there is more evidence to come yet."

The voice was that of Hikozaemon. "No, no," exclaimed Matsudaira Izu-no-Kami. "There is no object in waiting."

"I have sent Tasuke to search for one Bumbei, who knows Gorobei's history well," replied Hikozaemon; "please wait at any rate till he returns. In the administration of public justice, that which demands investigation should be investigated to the utmost limits. It is only after truth and falsehood have been clearly distinguished from each other by every possible means that those who are worthy of condemnation should be condemned and those who are innocent should be declared so. If this be not done, the administration of

justice is sure to miscarry. For this reason I beg that you will wait."

"What you say is very true," replied Izu-no-Kami. "Before men are condemned minute inquiry should be made; but as we do not know where Bumbei is, and as Etchū-no-Kami declares that the document which Nao has produced was written by Gorozaemon, there is nothing to wait for."

"To me it seems," interposed the Shōgun (who spoke from behind a screen which entirely hid him from view), "that what Hikozaemon says is perfectly reasonable. If Bumbei is acquainted with details which affect the case, then, though there may be difficulty in finding him, he ought to be sought for throughout the length and breadth of the land. To rely only on such evidence as is at hand and easily procured, and to neglect to collect what is distant and difficult to obtain, is not the right way of administering public justice. Judgment on the case must be postponed." Thus ended that day's proceedings.

In the meanwhile, Tasuke and his two companions had set out for Tsagaru. They had heard that Bumbei was in Hirasaki, and therefore were intending to go to that town first, but when they got near Koga, a place on the high road to Niihō,* just as they were sitting

* The next station to Kōfuji on the North Trunk line—35 miles from Tokyo.

down to have a pipe under the shade of the pine-trees planted along the road-side, they noticed that not far from them sat a man who evidently was on his way to Edo. Like themselves, he had also stopped to have a smoke. They asked him for a light and got into conversation with him. They found out that he had come from Hirosaki. On being asked whether he knew Kisaki Bumbei, the man replied that he did. "But," said he, "he is not in Hirosaki now. He has gone to Nikkō, and is living in Tera-machi there."

Hearing this, the three men set off for Nikkō. They searched about in various parts of the village, but could hear nothing of any such person as Bumbei. They began to think that the man whom they met at Koga had deceived them for some reason or other. At any rate they concluded that it was useless searching further in Nikkō, so they agreed to go elsewhere.

They went to the posting station and ordered horses, and, telling the people there that they were in a great hurry, mounted their steeds and, setting off at a rapid pace, were soon out of the village. Just as they had cleared the village, they met a priest on horseback. Frightened by the rapid way in which the three horses were approaching, or by the dress of the riders, the priest's horse turned round and ran off at a great rate.

The priest, who was getting up in years, fell off, and, as the road lay between two rice-fields and was very narrow, he alighted on his head in one of the rice-fields beneath and was stunned.

The three men stopped, picked the old priest up and gave him all kinds of restoratives to bring him round. At last he revived and they took him back to the posting station. Here they were detained by the authorities till the priest had properly recovered from the effects of his fall. This occupied about half the day.

As it was noon, they thought that before starting on their journey they would have their dinner. So they went to a small inn near and sat down to dine, when who should turn up but the old priest. He had come to thank them for their kindness to him. After doing this he asked them where they were going, and Tasuke told him that they were in search of one Kisaki Bumbei. The old man smiled and said:—"I am he."

He told them that he had been looking for Gorobei for nineteen years, and that he had become a priest to enable him to travel from place to place without creating suspicion.

The joy of both the seekers and the sought knew no bounds. They all set off in post haste to Edo, and Tasuke landed his charge safely in Hikozemon's house.

Hikozaemon was afraid that attempts might be made on the life of a man whose evidence was expected to affect Gorobei's case so materially. He therefore kept Bumbei by his side night and day; and old as Hikozaemon was, he would have defended his guest against all comers.

On the 21st of October, A.D. 1627, Gorobei's case came up for hearing again. Though Tasuke's journey to Nikkō and back in those days of slow travelling had taken several weeks, the interest in the case had not flagged during the interval. And now the news of the arrival of the man who had been waited for so long intensified the excitement that existed. So on the above-mentioned day the Shōgun and all the chief Government officers, clad in their robes of State, assembled in the Court House. Elevated on a high seat at the back behind a screen sat the illustrious grandson of the great founder of the Tokugawa Shōgunate, Iemitsu. In front of him, but on a lower elevation, sat the three great Lords of Kii, Owari, and Mito; beneath them was Matsudaira Izu-no-Kami, a State-councillor; and beneath him again Hizen-no-Kami, the Magistrate. Facing the Magistrate, on the one side were the plaintiffs, and on the other the defendants.

Kisaki Bumbei did not enter the court until he was summoned. After every one had taken his place the

summons was given. All eyes were anxiously turned to the door by which he was to enter, the spectators being eager to see what kind of a man he was that had been waited for so long and whose evidence it was asserted would upset the decision of the former court. They were all taken aback when an old emaciated priest made his appearance at the door. On entering Bumbei went at once to Gorobei and, taking his sleeve in his hand, with tears in his eyes, said:—"It is a long, long time since we met. How you have changed! I should hardly know you."

After watching the two for some little time, Hizen-no-Kami stated to Bumbei that, through the evidence given by Nao, Gorobei had already been condemned to death, but that at the request of Hikozaemon his execution had been delayed. "As you are said to be in possession of evidence bearing on the case," observed the Magistrate, "we are now assembled to hear what you have to tell us."

"I have known this Gorobei from his childhood, commenced Bumbei, "and I can testify that he is an honest man, and that he has always been most filial to his parents. That his wife would after his death seize his property and give it to her son-in-law was foreseen by Gorozaemon, and therefore it was that in his

last illness he called me to his bedside and requested me to see to it that his son Gorobei was made heir to his estates."

Bumbei now produced the document entrusted to him by Gorozaemon the contents of which I have given above.*

The Magistrate took the document, looked at it narrowly, and handed it to Izu-no-Kami; and he, after inspecting it, passed it on to Etchū-no-Kami. After they had all examined it, they waited to see what the Magistrate would say; but he did not seem to know what to say, so Izu-no-Kami came forward and addressed Nao as follows:—"The document that you presented to us some time ago is a forgery. That is evident by comparing it with the one that Bumbei has now shown us. Yours was put together by copying single characters from Gorozaemon's writing. That it has been so composed is made apparent by the characters not running into each other."

It is necessary to say here that such documents are usually written in one of the two running hands known as *sōsho* and *gyōsho*; so that when written properly one character is joined to another. This it would be difficult to imitate when copying a special handwriting, where

* *Vide* p. 406.

the characters copied were found in different combinations.

"Gorobei's document," continued Izu-no-Kami, "though penned when Gorozaemon was ill, was evidently written right off by one hand at one time, as there are no breaks in it whatever. Have you anything to say in reply to this?"

Nao was silent.

"Then you are guilty of having attempted to impose on the court by falsehood?"

Still there was no reply. A written confession of her crime was then drawn up and sealed by her own hand.

Gorobei and Bumbei were placed in charge of Hikozaemon.

Nao, her daughter and son-in-law were all condemned to death,* but, through the intercession of Gorobei, the sentence was changed to banishment. They were all sent to Hachijō, where they ended their days in obscurity and disgrace.

The three men who pretended to be wounded were also banished to a distant place.

As for Tōemon, Tanomo and Takumi, the Magistrate announced that their case would be settled later on.

* This sentence seems now to be tremendously severe. But in those times forgery was punished by death as was sheep stealing in England at a much later date.

These three men, owing to their rank, were not confined in the common prison, but placed in what was called in those days an "*agariya*," a house specially set apart for the confinement of better class prisoners. Here they were strictly guarded and not allowed to go out anywhere.



CHAPTER III.

One day, when Tōemon, Tanomo and Takumi were talking to each other about the course of events, one of them remarked :—"There is little doubt that we shall have to die. But having disgraced the name of *katamoto* by our conduct, shall we not endeavour to kill Gorobei before dying ourselves? So shall we do something to wipe off the reproach that we have brought on our profession and our families." To this proposal the others agreed. The plan they concocted for accomplishing their purpose was as follows: They bribed one of the guards to take a letter to Mizuno Jūbei, a friend of Tōemon's, asking him to procure Gorobei by some means or other and send him to them.

Now Jūbei held *katamoto* in very high esteem and so he took to heart very much the disgrace which had overtaken his comrade. Actuated by genuine *esprit de corps*, he was determined to do what he could to comply with Tōemon's request, though it might cost him his life.

Jūbei knew that Hikozaemon would not easily part with his charge. So he had a coffin prepared, which he ordered his servants to carry to Hikozaemon's gate.

Before he left his home he said to his family :—"I am now going to Hikozaemon's house on important business, and it may be that I shall not come back alive. I have therefore had a coffin sent on to bring back my corpse in case I die there."

Jūbei set out on horseback for Hikozaemon's house. On reaching it he made his request, telling Hikozaemon plainly that unless he was prepared to grant it, he (Jūbei) had made up his mind to kill him and commit suicide.

"I am not at liberty," replied Hikozaemon, "to do as I please with Gorobei. He is entrusted to me by the authorities, and I may not deliver him up unless commanded to do so by them. Even supposing that they should agree to his being handed over to his enemies, what credit would there be in three strong men all setting on a poor weak emaciated creature, that is little better than a ghost, and killing him? If they want to do anything of this kind, let them kill his son Gosuke. I will procure him for you, if you wish it."

This satisfied Jūbei, and he conveyed the information without delay to Tōemon.

Hikozaemon was determined to put these three men to shame, and make them reap the fruits of their own folly right on to the bitter end. So he concocted a plan for bringing about their destruction in a way that would

be considered as honourable to his own party as humiliating to their foes. He called Gosuke and told him of the agreement he had made. "Don't you be killed quietly by these fellows," said Hikozaemon. "Fight it out with them; and unless I am much mistaken, you will come off victorious. But you must be trained in fencing for some time yet."

Hikozaemon then informed Jūbei that he had communicated to Gosuke what they had agreed to, and that Gosuke had said that as his father could not last much longer he would like to attend his funeral before dying himself. Jūbei from time to time asked Hikozaemon whether Gosuke was not ready; but he was repeatedly put off, and this went on till six months had elapsed after the matter had been decided on.

All this while Gosuke had been practising fencing from morning to night. Three of Hikozaemon's best fencing masters had been giving him instruction. At the end of the time, Hikozaemon thought that there was no mistake about Gosuke's being a match for the three men; but as he did not wish him to be killed, he told Tasuke to go with him into the fencing ring, and if he saw that he was in danger to help him.

Hikozaemon then reported to Hizen-no-Kami what he purposed doing; and the Magistrate gave his consent to the holding of a public fencing match.

Accordingly, on June 25th A.D. 1628, the combat took place, the fencing ring being formed at Namiki, Asakusa. Hizen-no-Kami and a number of his subordinates were present to see fair play. Hikozaemon and Jūbei also attended and a large crowd of less noted spectators surrounded the ring.

When the preparations were complete, the three men all entered the lists together, dressed in the white clothes which it is customary for such persons to wear on these occasions. From the opposite side entered Gosuke, also dressed in white. When the drum, which in this country corresponded to the trumpets of the heralds in ancient European tournaments, gave the signal for the commencement of the fight, the three men walked into the centre of the ring, and Gosuke advanced to meet them. For a moment the combatants eyed each other, and as they did it, Tōemon said to Gosuke:—
“You are a fortunate townsman, to be privileged to die by the hand of a *hatamoto*.”

Without further parley, the three men rushed at Gosuke with the intention of cutting him in two at one stroke; but he warded off the blows and commenced to fight in right earnest: now cutting, now guarding, now leaping from one side of the ring to the other, to escape the thrusts of his antagonists' swords. The three men

first combined in an attack on Gosuke in front, but finding this not answer, they separated, Tōemon attacking him in front and his two assistants from the side. The latter thought to kill him with a side stroke. When the spectators saw this, they held their breath in anxious suspense. But in an instant Gosuke sprang away and thus avoided all three strokes at once. No sooner did he ward off one blow, however, than another came. Tōemon grew furious. "This mean fellow!—parrying our blows in this way; he makes me mad," exclaimed the *hatamoto*, as he commenced to assault Gosuke afresh.

Gosuke kept cool and was proof against all attempts to cut him down. When blows were high, he stooped and allowed them to pass over his head; when low, he leaped up in the air and let them go under his feet. The skill and rapidity of his movements are said to have resembled those of Yoshitsune of old. The flashing of the swords of the combatants was like lightning. The spectators perspired with excitement, and strained their eyes to observe every movement of the antagonists. Attack after attack did Gosuke repel, but by degrees he showed signs of fatigue, and it became plain that unless speedy assistance were given him, he must fall a victim to his foes—a fate which most of those present would have deplored. Voices from the crowd were heard:—"Tasuke!

Tasuke! be quick! don't let them kill him!" Tasuke had entered the ring with Gosuke, but hitherto had kept out of the way. But thinking now that the spectators were right in supposing Gosuke to be in danger, he took one of the dirks which he had concealed in his bosom and threw it at Tanomo just as he had his arm uplifted to make another cut at Gosuke. Tasuke was skilled in dirk throwing; so his aim was sure, and the weapon entered the arm of the assailant and at once it dropped powerless to his side. Tōemon saw this, and he at once ran over to cut Tasuke down, but Tasuke in an instant had another dirk ready, which he hurled at Tōemon, striking out his left eye. Tōemon fell to the ground. Takumi now came to attack Tasuke, but he too received a dirk, which entered deep into his thigh. While all this was going on, Gosuke was not idle. No sooner had the dirk entered Tanomo's arm than he was felled to the ground by Gosuke's sword and killed. Tōemon, on his falling, shared the same fate. So that when Takumi received the dirk wound he was the only one left to oppose Gosuke: he was instantaneously despatched. Thus fell all Gosuke's foes.

When the fight was over, Gosuke walked up to the place where the Magistrate was seated, and, kneeling down before him, said:—"I, a townsman, have com-

mitted the great crime of killing three *hatamoto*. It is unnecessary for me to say that whatever punishment you are pleased to appoint I shall willingly undergo."

"Your case will be considered and you will hear from us in a day or two," replied Hizen-no-Kami. "In the meantime you are placed in charge of Hikozaemon."

Hikozaemon, Tasuke and Gosuke all left the ring together. The report of what the two men had accomplished had reached the crowd outside, and, with shouts of applause, they accompanied the little party to Hikozaemon's house. Here the three men and their friends all sat down to a great feast which Hikozaemon had, in anticipation of the result, prepared for them.

On the twenty-eighth of June a letter from Matsudaira Izu-no-Kami reached Hikozaemon, commanding that on the following day at 9 a.m. he should conduct Matsumae Gosuke to the Shōgun's castle, specifying what clothes the latter was to put on, and adding that he was to wear two swords in his belt. The letter was signed by Hotta Sagami-no-Kami, Kuga Yamato-no-Kami and Matsudaira Izu-no-Kami.

Hikozaemon wept tears of joy when this letter arrived. "I have been exerting myself all this time on behalf of Gosuke," said he, "and at last I am rewarded. This is a very happy letter. Gosuke will be made a *hatamoto*.

to-morrow as sure as I am alive. Then he will no longer be the Gosuke that we now know, but another man: my rank and his will be alike."

Hikozaemon called Gorobei and told him of all the honour that was in store for his son. "The Shōgun's kindness to you is higher than heaven and deeper than the sea," said Hikozaemon.

Gorobei thanked Hikozaemon in a somewhat absent manner for the help he had given him, but said little besides. They all awaited in anxious expectation the events of the following day.

The next morning at the appointed time, Hikozaemon and Gosuke went to the castle. On their arrival they found the three above-named officers prepared to receive them. They were informed that the Shōgun was extremely pleased at the way in which Gosuke had shown his filial piety in becoming a substitute for his father and in consenting to deliver himself up to his parent's enemies, and at the valour he had displayed in killing the three *hatamoto*, and that on this account he had exalted him to the rank of a *hatamoto* and had given orders that land valued at two thousand *koku* a year and a house in Tera-machi, Ushigome, be assigned to him.

Iemitsu proposed to increase the annual income of Ōkubo Hikozaemon in consideration of his services on

this occasion. But the latter refused to take anything for what he had done. The Shōgun, however, induced him to accept a present of two swords; made by the famous swordsmith Kunimitsu, and a dress suit of clothes in memory of the part he had taken in the case.

Hikozaemon mounted Gosuke on a horse and took him around to all the great barons, for the purpose of acquainting them with his new appointment and of paying his respects to them. The two then went home and told Gorobei all that had occurred.

Gorobei had been in prison a long time and had suffered very much from the effects of the torture to which he had been subjected. His nervous system was undermined; his whole physical frame disorganized; his mental powers too had been very much weakened by the intense anxiety of the preceding six or eight months. When the news of Gosuke's appointment therefore was conveyed to him, he suddenly stood up, a thing he had not been able to do since he came out of prison, uttered a few somewhat incoherent words, signifying the delight which the news had produced in his mind, and then dropped dead to the ground. The sudden change from shame and trouble to such undreamt of success and honour was too much for him. He fell, as many another has done, a victim to the misfortunes of his life.

The next day Tasuke was summoned to the Chief Magistrate's office and informed that since he had exerted himself so much on Gorobei's behalf it had been decided to give him Gorobei's house and ground.

Tasuke thanked the Magistrate, but declined the gift "—Shirobei," said he, "has had the management of Gorobei's business for a long time, and he has shown great diligence and trustworthiness in the post that he has occupied. I should like him to be rewarded, so please give him the house and the land. It was not for gain that I assisted Gorobei, but because I knew that his cause was a just one.

Tasuke was subsequently made manager of the Shōgun's stables, an office which suited his tastes and disposition.

Kisaki Bumbei had a temple erected for him in Hiro-saki, where he superintended the worship of the spirits of the house of Matsumae Gorobei.

Gosuke took his mother to his new house in Tera-machi and passed the rest of his days in prosperity, becoming extremely popular among his fellow-*katamoto*.

Iyo-no-Kami, hearing that his daughter had committed suicide owing to the misfortunes brought on the family by her father's and husband's folly, and overcome with vexation at the contempt with which he was regarded on account of his recent conduct, followed his

daughter to the grave, destroying himself in the orthodox fashion.

So ends the story of "The Triumph of Right over Might." Nothing could be more admirable than the noble, disinterested way in which perfect strangers to Gorobei took up his cause and defended it to the very last. It is most gratifying, too, to see the Shōgun interfering on behalf of persecuted innocence and rejoicing even at the downfall of his own *hatamoto* because fully convinced that their destruction was the result of their crimes.





JAPAN IN DAYS OF YORE.

VIII.

TOKUGAWA IEYASU, THE TOKUGAWA LAWS, AND THEIR ADMINISTRATION.

CHAPTER I.

TOKUGAWA IEYASU was descended from the great Nitta family. His ancestors had a village bestowed on them in the province of Mikawa called Tokugawa, from which the family name was derived. He was the only son of Hirotada Mikawa-no-Kami.

Hirotada married the daughter of Mizu-no-Tadamasa, in 1541 A.D. Ieyasu was born in Okazaki the following year. It was customary with the Tokugawa family to give the name of Takechiyo to all first-born sons. Accordingly this was the first name the great hero received.

When Takechiyo was only five years old his father requested Inagawa Yoshimoto to lend him some troops, to be employed in the war he was carrying on against Oda Nobuhide Nobunaga's father. Yoshimoto granted the request and, according to the custom of those days, demanded Hirotada's son as a surety. Hirotada consented,

and so, as though it were fated that Takechiyo should be inured to hardship and privation from his earliest childhood, he was despatched to Suruga as a hostage when most children are enjoying the quiet, innocent amusements of early youth in their own homes.

On the way to Suruga he was seized by order of Nobuhide, who sent a messenger to Hirotada to inform him that Takechiyo was his prisoner, and that therefore he had better break faith with Yoshimoto and join his side.

"If you are determined to kill Takechiyo," replied Hirotada, "then you must do so. But that I should, even for the sake of saving the life of my own son, break through the agreement that I have made with my neighbour Yoshimoto is altogether out of the question."

Nobuhide was very angry and made it as uncomfortable for the child as he could, keeping him a close prisoner.

In 1549 A.D. Hirotada died; and in the same year his great enemy Nobuhide also passed away, and was succeeded by his son Nobunaga, who made peace with Imagawa. This led to the release of Takechiyo, who returned to his native place at the age of seven.

But he had not been in Okazaki more than fourteen or fifteen days before he was again sent off as a hostage. It happened in this wise. Yoshimoto, on the death of

Hirotsada, claimed the dues on the Mikawa estates, and commanded Takechiyo's retainers to send the lad to him to be kept as a pledge in his castle of Miyazaki till he grew up, when Yoshimoto promised to send him back to Okazaki.

In the meanwhile Yoshimoto took command of all the Okazaki warriors. He did all he could to kill or humiliate the Mikawa men. In time of war they were always placed in the most dangerous positions and in time of peace they were appointed to the lowest offices. The Mikawa generals, however, said nothing. They were glad of the military experience which they gained under Yoshimoto, and so they fought bravely and waited eagerly for the time when their young master would be old enough to set up for himself and they would be called upon to defend him against his numerous enemies.

Takechiyo met with no better treatment than his retainers. The food and clothes supplied to him by Yoshimoto were both insufficient. But, fortunately for the lad, there was one who befriended him. This was no other than Torii Tadayoshi, a man who was appointed to collect the dues on the Mikawa lands. He supplied Takechiyo with both clothes and money, and sent his son Mototada to the castle to attend to his wants.

In 1556 A.D. the *Gembuku** ceremony was performed on Takechiyo. He received the name of Motonobu and married the daughter of Sekiguchi Chikanaga. On this occasion he requested Yoshimoto to allow him to return to Okazaki to worship at his father's tomb. This request was granted. So he returned to his native place.

The people of Okazaki and the neighbourhood young and old crowded out to meet their lord and welcome him back on this occasion. All the chief officers of the province came to the castle to greet him. Among them there were many old men who had served under his father. They said that they hoped the day was not far distant when they should see their native province independent once more and presided over by the young baron who was now in their midst. Tadayoshi, though then a very old man, appeared among the rest. Taking Motonobu by the hand, Tadayoshi said:—"I am now very old and cannot go out to war any more, but I have laid by for your use in a large number of storehouses a heap of rice as high as a mountain. This take and, collecting troops, make your power felt in the world. If you do this the great object of my life will be realized, and I shall die in peace."

* A rite connected with the assumption of majority. If the above dates are correct he was only fourteen when this ceremony was performed. Fifteen was the usual age.

Motonobu was not allowed to reside permanently in his own castle at Okazaki. He was recalled to Miyazaki, and from this time he assumed the name of Motoyasu. One day, when Motoyasu was conversing with Yoshimoto, the latter remarked :—"Western Mikawa is part of your territory, but it has gradually become subject to Oda Nobunaga, why do you not go and take it out of his hands?"

"Nothing would please me better," replied Motoyasu.

So, in 1558 A.D., at the age of sixteen, Motoyasu returned to Okazaki and, gathering his forces, went out to battle. He first attacked Terabe. The Mikawa men commenced the assault by setting fire to the castle, which forced the garrison to come out against them. Nobunaga's men sold their lives dearly, and for some time it was hard to say which side would be victorious. But Honda Sakuzaemon, by an extraordinary feat of valour, turned the tide against Nobunaga's troops and they were totally defeated.

After this Motoyasu returned once more to Miyazaki. Yoshimoto congratulated him on his success, gave him his own sword and three hundred *kwan** of land.

* The term *kwan* began to be used in reference to the incomes of *daimyō* and their retainers at the end of the Hōjō era, and no other word was employed in the Ashikaga age. It represented 1000 *mon* in money.

This same year several of Motoyasu's chief retainers came to Yoshimoto to ask that as now Motoyasu had grown up Yoshimoto would do as he had promised, namely, send him back to his own territory to reside. He agreed to do this. But before it was carried out Yoshimoto, who had designs on the Government at Kyōto, attacked the province of Owari, and, taking the castle of Ōtaka, entrusted it to Motoyasu to keep while he himself went on to Okehasama. Here Yoshimoto fought a battle against Oda Nobunaga and was killed.*

When the retainers of Yoshimoto who were left with Ieyasu in the Ōtaka castle heard that their master was dead, they fled from the castle.

Whereupon Motoyasu's chief retainers came to him and said:—"Seeing that Yoshimoto is dead, why should we guard this castle any longer? Let us go home."

"Let me first know the reasons for such a course being taken," said Motoyasu. "I am not the one to go off in such a hurry before I know what I am doing. If we make a mistake in what we do, we shall only excite the ridicule of the world."

Just then another messenger arrived, and reported that, on hearing of the death of Yoshimoto, his retainers

* For a full account of this war and the events preceding it see my "New Life of Toyotomi Hideyoshi", p. 100 *et seq.*

who were guarding various other castles had one and all fled.

"Wait a while," said Motoyasu. "Let us be sure that what we hear is true before we act." By despatching special messengers he ascertained that the reports which had reached him were quite correct. His retainers urged him to start at once, even though it was dark at the time.

"If we do this we shall lose the way," replied Motoyasu. "Why be in such a hurry? If any one comes to attack us we can defend ourselves; so there is nothing to be afraid of." They waited till the moon rose, and then started off eastward on the road to Okazaki. They got as far as Imamura and were about to enter the Okazaki castle, when Motoyasu suddenly halted and said:—"While Yoshimoto was still alive, he said nothing about handing over the castle to me, therefore it is not right of me to take it even though he be dead."

Forbearing to enter the castle, for three days Motoyasu quartered his men in a temple called the Daijuji. While they were here the Suruga troops who had charge of the Okazaki castle all fled.

Motoyasu, seeing this, said:—"What they have thrown away we will pick up," and at once entered the castle. He was then in his twentieth year, when for the

first time in his life he felt that the castle which he occupied was his own to be defended against all comers.

Those parts of the province of Mikawa which had been subject to Hirotada gladly submitted to his son's rule. There were, however, which still belonged to Oda Nobun. These Motoyasu determined to subjugate.

But just at this time Nobunaga being anxious to be at the head of the Ōyōto and foreseeing that Motoyasu could assume various ways, sent ambassadors to him proposing terms of peace.

Motoyasu called a council of his chief retainers to discuss these terms. Sakai Tadatsugu opened the debate thus:—

"Seeing that ours is a small province, with powerful neighbours both on the east and the west, it will be difficult for us to maintain our independence. As for Yoshimoto's son, Ujisane, he does nothing but tittle and idle away his time and makes no attempt to avenge his father's death. It is no use having any transactions with such a man. Therefore I am of opinion that we cannot do better than make peace with Nobunaga."

"That is impossible," replied Motoyasu. "How can we forget all the benefits that we have received from Yoshimoto and turn against his house?"

"Tadatsugu is right," remarked two other retainers. "For Yoshimoto's friendship for us was feigned and not real. He seized the produce of our land and did all he could to get rid of us altogether. What is there to bind us to such a man? As regards the wife and child of our master, we can easily get them out of the hands of Ujisane. Ujisane is anxious to keep friendly with us and therefore will not think of injuring them in any way."

After hearing all his retainers had to say, Motoyasu agreed to the terms of peace proposed and went in person to the castle of Kiyosu to see Nobunaga. When Motoyasu and his retainers approached the castle of Kiyosu, they found that a crowd of spectators had assembled to see them pass. Honda Tadakatsu, then only thirteen years of age, seeing that the way was thronged with people, rode in front of Motoyasu and, waving his halberd to and fro, said to the crowd:—"Get out of the way, you rude folks; don't you see that my master is here?"

Nobunaga came out to meet his guest and conducted him into the castle. Contrary to custom, Uemura Yoshimasu one of Motoyasu's retainers, followed his master into the presence of Nobunaga. One of the guards found fault with him for this intrusion. To him he replied:—"I

am Uemura Yoshimasa. I bear my master's sword after him, why then do you find fault with me?"

"I have heard the name of Yoshimasa for a long time," interposed Nobunaga; "allow him to enter."

It was the possession of such faithful and fearless retainers by Ieyasu that contributed in a large measure to his subsequent great success.

Nobunaga and Motoyasu agreed to terms of peace: and more than this, they made an offensive and defensive treaty, solemnly promising that they would combine their forces and endeavour to subjugate the whole empire. They agreed that whichever of them conquered the most territory should eventually become the lord of the other. After being entertained most handsomely, Motoyasu returned to Okazaki.

By the year 1564 A.D. Motoyasu had subdued the whole of the western part of Mikawa. And the following year the whole province became subject to him. His three chief retainers, Honda Sakuzaemon, Kōriki Yozaemon, and Amano Saburohyōe were now made *Ie-bugyō*, that is, Superintendents of Household Affairs, and Motoyasu's name was changed to Ieyasu, and he assumed the title of Mikawa-no Kami.

In 1570 A.D., having conquered the whole of Tōtōmi, Ieyasu removed to the castle of Hamamatsu, situated in

that province, where he resided for a number of years. His power was felt in all the neighbourhood; in fact, he was looked on as the most influential baron of the Tō-kaidō. But he had one enemy whom he could not overcome, and that was Takeda Shingen, the Lord of Kai, Shinano. In A.D. 1573, Shingen and Ieyasu had a pitched battle at Mikata-ga-hara. Ieyasu met with as severe a defeat as it was possible for a general to receive, and was within an inch of losing his life.

Shingen died the same year; and ten years later just as Ieyasu and Nobunaga had succeeded in destroying Shingen's house, Nobunaga was killed by Akechi Mitsuhide.*

In 1594 A.D., Ieyasu supported the cause of Nobunaga's son, Nobuo, and fought against Hideyoshi at Komaki-yama. On this occasion Sakakibara Yasumasa sent a letter to various barons, urging them to oppose Toyotomi Hideyoshi; which contained the following remarks:—

“Hideyoshi, in that he lightly esteems all the benefits he has received from his master, is like a fiend or some poisonous insect. He sends troops against the progeny

* Many events only briefly alluded to here, such as the assassination of Oda Nobunaga, are fully related in my “New Life of Toyotomi Hideyoshi.”

of his late lord. Who is there that does not grind his teeth in anger at such conduct? Your lordships have all been employed by Nobunaga in the same way as Hideyoshi was employed. And how did it come about that Nobunaga was in a position to command your services?"

Yasumasa intended to remind them here that they had received numerous gifts of land from Nobunaga and that on that account they ought to serve his son.

"Lord Tokugawa has been requested to fight against Hideyoshi and has brought all the troops of five provinces to join battle with him.

"When there is a cause so righteous as ours, victory is sure, and therefore we shall soon cut off the head of this scoundrel and make a gazing-stock of it. If you all repent of past neglect and heartily support us in the vindication of the just and the right, then I am authorized to say that all your past remissness will be overlooked. But if you refuse to do this, then you shall all be put to death. Take heed that you do not act now in a way that you will be sorry for hereafter."

Ieyasu was no match for Hideyoshi in war. He only obtained a temporary victory over two of Hideyoshi's generals in what is known as the Komaki war. Not being able to follow it up, Ieyasu was glad to accept the

terms of peace offered by Hideyoshi.*

In 1590 A.D., under the leadership of Hideyoshi, Ieyasu went against Hōjō Ujimasa. On the latter being subdued, the whole of his territory was given to Ieyasu. At this time the castle of Edo was enlarged and Ieyasu took up his residence in it at the request of the *Taikō*. Thus suddenly his power became immense.

It happened, one day, after Ieyasu had thus risen to power, that Hideyoshi assembled all the chief barons subject to him. As they were sitting around him, Hideyoshi took his little child in his arms and asked him who was most to be feared among all the barons assembled there. The lad gazed around, and his eye rested on Mōri Terumoto, who was tall and fierce-looking. "He," said the boy, pointing to Terumoto, "is the most to be feared."

"No," replied Hideyoshi, "it is not so." Then, pointing to Ieyasu, he continued, "That oldish-looking dark-faced man sitting in the front row there is the most to be feared." Then, with a view of seeing what Ieyasu would say, he added:—"In war, however, there is no one equal to me."

"There you are right," replied the assembled barons,

* For an account of this war *vide* my "New Life of Toyotomi Hideyoshi" p 264 *et seq.*

"there is no one to be compared to you in war."

Hideyoshi died in 1598 A.D. After his death Ishida Mitsunari who was jealous of the power of Ieyasu, espoused the cause of Hideyori, Hideyoshi's son, and thought to overthrow Ieyasu. Sekigahara war Mitsunari was defeated, and Ieyasu became supreme. In 1602, A.D. he assumed the title of shōgun. Subsequent to this he effectually put Hideyori's party at Ōsaka.

It was in April of the following that which marked the conclusion of the Ōsaka war and the death by his own hand of Hideyori when Ieyasu grew very ill. Feeling he was going to die, he sent for his grandson Iemitsu. "You," said Ieyasu to his grandson, "will govern the country later on. The secret of government, let me tell you, is in kind feeling." These were his last words. He died April 17th [O.C.], A.D. 1616."



CHAPTER II.

Rai Sanyō sums up the character of Ieyasu as follows:—

“Ieyasu was a man who, with a gentle and candid disposition, had a great purpose in life. He used soldiers with the wisdom of a god. He was fond of reading and anxious to become acquainted with the principles of government. He loved his fellow-men and made good use of the advice they gave him. In arranging affairs he took into consideration not only what was required in his own time, but what would suit the generations that were to succeed him. His allegiance to the Emperor was all that could be desired. He looked upon the preservation of the empire as something for which he was responsible. He was economical, and never indulged in display of any kind. He held farmers and peasants in high esteem, and was intimately acquainted with their affairs. When he went out hunting, which he frequently did, he went partly for the purpose of hunting and partly to make inquiries into the state of the country and the people. In governing his great object was not to crush but to encourage the spirit, energy, and independence of

thought of those beneath him. He made it easy for men of inferior rank to speak their minds whenever they pleased. He discountenanced all flattery, trimming and plausibility of speech and manner. It is recorded of him that when he was young some one in Owari sent him a shrike, known as the hundred-tongued bird. He refused to accept it, remarking:—"I have heard it said that persons who expect to become leaders of men should avoid plausible things, and this hundred-tongued bird is certainly one of them."

By some Japanese authorities Sanyō's account of Ieyasu's character is considered too flattering.

Both Hideyoshi and Ieyasu on certain occasions showed that they were men of violent passions, but at other times manifested rare self-command. There was perhaps less sophistry in the morality of Ieyasu than in that of Hideyoshi, and on the whole Ieyasu seems to have had a more benevolent, as well as a more refined and better disciplined, mind than that possessed by his illustrious contemporary.*

The following anecdotes relating to Ieyasu are very well known in Japan and go far to show what were the

* For further comparison of the characters of the two men *vide* my *New Life of Toyotomi Hideyoshi*, p 394 *et seq.*

leading traits of his character. It is not important that they should be given in the order of their occurrence, even were that order in every case known.

I.

THE CHILD IS FATHER OF THE MAN.

As related above, Tokugawa Ieyasu when young was sent by his father as a hostage to Imagawa Yoshimoto.

It was customary in those days for the children of Suruga on the fifth of May to play at throwing stones at each other. Grown-up people used to go out to watch the affray and, excited by the scene, would take sides and help the children in the fight.

One year, when this custom was being observed, it happened that Ieyasu, who was then just ten years old, was taken out on the shoulders of an attendant to see the fight. On this occasion the combatants on one side amounted to about 150. Those who arrived from different quarters all joined the side which seemed the stronger. Ieyasu bade the man who was carrying him take the side of the few. The servant was surprised at this, and asked why he was to act thus. "The side of the many," replied the lad, "will rely on its numbers and will not fight together; but the side of the few will use its strength to the best advantage and will make up

for its deficient numbers by increased carefulness. It will therefore conquer." It happened just as he had said; the side of the few won the victory.

Yoshimoto was informed of what had occurred, and remarked :—"How true is that saying, 'He that comes forth from the house of a brave man is sure to be brave!'"

II.

IEYASU'S HATRED OF LYING.

In the affairs of his household Ieyasu showed a great deal of discretion. Little faults and even breakages he said nothing about, but if there was anything contrary to truth in things that were stated by his servants he showed great annoyance and reproved them most severely. In reference to this the following incident is related :—

It happened after the Ōsaka war, when Ieyasu was in the Nijō castle, that he had occasion to make some inquiries of a man called Mishuku Echizen who was employed in the castle. At the close of the conversation Echizen casually remarked that he had during the Kōnodai war accomplished several feats of valour. Ieyasu pondered a little; and then asked, "How old are you?"

Having heard the man's reply, he remarked :—"The Kōnodai war occurred when Hōjō Ujiyasu was either a

little over or a little under fifty years of age, and when his son Ujimasa was about twenty-six or seven. Therefore you could only have been some four or five years old when you accomplished the feats of valour of which you speak. The statement you have made is entirely false. Get away out of my sight."

Here Ieyasu's countenance changed and he was so moved with anger that his face was dreadful to look at. "If we allow such a man as this to remain connected with us in any way," he remarked, "there is no saying but that the evil habit which he has contracted may become fashionable among us. Therefore something had better be done with him at once."

What punishment Echizen received is not recorded. Ieyasu died shortly after this, and it is not improbable that after his death the matter was allowed to drop.

III.

IEYASU'S DISLIKE OF EXTRAVAGANCE.

Once it happened that Eishōin, the wife of Ieyasu, came to her husband, and said:—"My Lord is in the habit of wearing white clothes, and I am in difficulty about getting them washed. To give the clothes of a great man to low women to wash is something that

I cannot make up my mind to do; and if I were to ask the higher class women to wash them, their delicate hands would be chafed by the work. When I even speak of it to them they put on a wry face. Why not give up wearing clothes and washing and use nothing but new things?

Ieyasu replied :- I do not know what women are for; and ignorant, it is a question whether you will be convinced by anything that I am going to say. However, I will explain this matter to you. If you do nothing but think of the storehouses that belong to me, situated not only in Edo and Osaka but in every province and town throughout the country, you will of course be astonished at their number; and will think that as I have in my possession mountains of linen, I should not run short even though I used 200 pieces daily. This might be all very well if I only thought of myself. But when I think of the multitudes who are around me and the generations of men who are to succeed me, I feel bound for their sakes to be sparing in my use of the goods in my possession, and therefore it is that I use washed clothes. What I do is in accordance with what nature teaches; for in all things she is economical."

IV.

IYEFASU'S CHIEF RETAINERS.

One of Ieyasu's chief retainers called Honda Sakuzaemon was a man of blunt honesty who never considered what he was going to say before speaking, but blurted out whatever came into his head.

When Hideyoshi was engaged in the Odawara war, Ieyasu for a short time handed over the castle of Hamamatsu to him and feasted all his retainers.

Before Hideyoshi reached the castle, Sakuzaemon was away on some business; but just as the former arrived with all his retinue and his servants were in the midst of carrying all manner of things into the castle, Sakuzaemon made his appearance. When he saw what was going on, he looked utterly disgusted, but went into the castle without uttering a word. Here he found assembled in the guests' room Hideyoshi and all his chief retainers, with Ieyasu in their midst.

Sakuzaemon, addressing his master, immediately called out with a loud voice:—"Well, my Lord, you are a foolish fellow! For a man who is the master of a certain territory to lend his castle, of all other things, to some one else, even for a single night!—*was ever such folly heard of?* I suppose there is nothing which could be

named that one who is as thoughtless as you would not lend." Having thus given vent to his feelings, Sakuzaemon left the room.

"What is the matter now, Sakuzaemon?" asked Ieyasu as he went out of the door. Then turning to his guests, he said:—"You have heard what this wild fellow has been saying. I am sorry that such a thing should have occurred; but there is no help for it. This is no other than Honda Sakuzaemon. He has been in my house ever since he was a child, and whenever I have gone out to battle he has accompanied me. He is a self-willed, uncontrollable kind of man, and he esteems men of rank and power at no higher rate than insects. You see how he acts even when you are present, and you can gather from this what he would say to me alone. I can put up with it however; but I am extremely sorry that you should have all been annoyed by his rudeness."

The various barons replied:—"We have all heard of this old man, but this is the first time we have seen for ourselves his manner of going on. You are to be congratulated on having such an honest, straightforward retainer."

As related above, Ieyasu made this rough fellow one of the three officers whose duty it was to look after all his affairs. People all said when Sakuzae-

mon was created a *Bugyō* that such an appointment would never answer. But nothing could have answered better. He was honest and straightforward with every one. He showed no favour anywhere. All that he did was above-board, and hence there was no complaining among his subordinates.

But as an antidote to the roughness and bluntness of this retainer, Ieyasu employed Kōriki Kiyonaga, a knight who was as polite and affable as Sakuzaemon was rough and uncouth. Then the Shōgun had also a chief retainer called Amano Saburō, whose disposition was compounded of the two elements, the fierce and the mild. The following verse was composed in reference to the three men:—

Kōriki, the divinity;
Sakuza, the devil;
Neither the one nor the other,
Amano Saburō.

It is recorded that Sakuzaemon was most taciturn in disposition, objecting to say much about any thing. The following is a specimen of one of his letters to his wife when away from home.—“Only a line. Be careful about fire.—Keep the child from crying.—Feed the horse well.”

Though Sakuzaemon was eccentric in habits and rough in manner, he was one of the most faithful, as well as the most affectionate, of Ieyasu's retainers.

V.

IEYASU'S SKILL IN THE USE OF MEN.

At the time of the Sekigahara war some of the followers of Ieyasu were assembled in the castle of Kiyosu, and were only awaiting the arrival of Ieyasu prior to attacking the castle of Gifu. As day after day passed without any signs of Ieyasu's approach, the soldiers gradually lost heart, and had no inclination to attack the castle.

After a while a messenger from Ieyasu, one Murakoshi Mosuke, arrived at Kiyosu. When Fukushima Masanori, Hosokawa Tadaoki, Ikeda Terumasa, Katō Yosoiaki, and some others, heard of his arrival, they conferred together, and agreed that when Mosuke delivered Ieyasu's message to the various barons, it would be well for him to say that Ieyasu had started for the seat of war and would soon reach Kiyosu. "For," said they, "if this is not done the soldiers will lose heart, and we shall never take the castle." So, calling Mosuke, Masanori asked him to do this.

"Very good;" replied Mosuke.

On his going to Honda Tadakatsu and Ikeda Terumasa's quarters, they also urged him to do as Masanori had suggested. "If you refuse," said they, "we will commit suicide."

“All right;” said Mosuke. “I will bear in mind what you say.”

In considering what course he should adopt on the following day, Mosuke said to himself:—“Ieyasu always looks on me as somewhat of a fool, and it being so, how is it that he has sent me on such an important mission as this? I have no doubt that it is because he wishes his message delivered on this occasion without ornament or alteration, and he thinks that my simplicity of character will enable me to deliver it thus. I will not disappoint him.”

The next day the various barons and generals all assembled in state to listen to the Shōgun’s message. There was a dead stillness when Mosuke commenced:—“Lord Ieyasu says that you are no doubt all very fatigued by the protracted war which has been carried on.”

To the surprise of all, Mosuke said no more. Thinking that he might have forgotten to say what the leaders of the army expected from him, and with the hopes of forcing it out of him, Tadaoki asked:—“When is Lord Ieyasu coming to us?”

“I do not know. When I came away,” replied Mosuke, “there were no signs whatever of his being about to start.”

The various leaders of the troops became white with rage and felt inclined to kill Mosuke for acting contrary to their advice. But having come as a messenger from their chief, they did not dare to injure him in any way.

In reply to the reproaches, Mosuke in a few concise words reminded them how matters stood as follows :—"One of the castles which belongs to us has been taken by the enemy. We must make no attempt to recover it. Then the enemy's castle of Gifu is right in front of you. Do not stir a finger to take it from them. Because the wives and children of a large number of you are in the possession of the enemy your hands are tied, your efforts are paralysed. As you all seem to be resting on your oars, there is nothing to induce Ieyasu to come; and while this state of things lasts, I do not see any chance of his making his appearance."

Here Masanori fanned Mosuke three times,* and replied :—"What you say is most reasonable. I trust that in about five days we shall capture the castle of Gifu. But as it may take a little longer, will you not stay ten days with us and carry the news of our victory back to Lord Ieyasu?"

* An old custom in token of high appreciation. *Take Koto*, 107.

"I did not come to take the castle or to see the castle taken," replied Mosuke, "I came with a message; and therefore when I get an answer to the same I shall go back"

"Well, anyhow," replied Masanori, "come and take some *sake* with me."

Mosuke went with Masanori, partook of the refreshments which he offered and slept in the castle that night.

During the night Masanori collected his forces and gave orders that the attack on the castle should commence at once; and as a result it was taken the following day; and Mosuke carried back the news of the victory to Ieyasu.

Ieyasu was most skilful in his choice of men to act in various positions. There is a Japanese saying to the effect that, "A good carpenter never throws wood away," and another adage tells us that, "Beneath a skilful general a weak soldier is not to be found." Ieyasu saw at once a use to which even dull and unpromising men might be put. His shrewdness taught him that this Mosuke's blunt honesty and straightforwardness would enable him to transact the business entrusted to him on the above-mentioned occasion in a more satisfactory manner than it would have been transacted by any one less unsophisticated than he was.

The secret of Ieyasu's many great achievements was the deep insight he had into men's characters, and the readiness with which he made the most diverse dispositions all contribute something towards insuring the success of the schemes which he was engaged in carrying out. This discernment is sufficient of itself to make any man of spirit who possesses it a great man, provided he has anything like a fair field in which to exercise it.

VI.

IEYASU UNNERVED.

One day, in the year 1585 A.D., when Ieyasu was just forty-three years of age, he was lying sick in the castle of Hamamatsu, suffering from a bad carbuncle. He commanded his attendants to squeeze it, but being very painful, they feared to press it hard. "What are you afraid of?" asked Ieyasu. "You are like a lot of women; you had better get clam shells, or something of the kind, and squeeze it."

His attendants were inexperienced in the matter and did not know what to do, but they thought something ought to be done. So they fetched the shells, and, placing one on each side of the carbuncle, they pressed it hard till their fingers cracked from it a white solid substance that looked like a cone.

"*There,*" said the Shōgun, "that will do." He hoped that after this the carbuncle would get better, but it was not long before it began to swell tremendously and caused so much pain that Ieyasu did not know what to do with himself. His countenance changed colour, and he looked as though he must die. Several doctors were called in, but none of them could afford any relief. Ieyasu, seeing that the doctors expressed no hope of saving his life, gathered his friends and relatives together to make known to them his will and to take leave of them. Not long after this it was reported in the vicinity of the castle that Ieyasu was dead.

Honda Sakuzaemon on being informed of the critical state in which his master was lying, immediately hastened to the Shōgun's castle and informed him that some time previously he (Sakuzaemon) had suffered from a carbuncle and that a doctor whom he knew had cured him. He asked whether Ieyasu would like him to call in this doctor?

"It is of no use," replied Ieyasu.

Sakuzaemon grew very angry, and said:—"This readiness on your part to die like a dog without making use of any of the means that are available, is something entirely out of harmony with your usual mode of thinking and acting. Is it not a thousand pities that you

should throw away your life in this way? Well, well!" he continued, "as nine out of ten of the doctors who attend you say you are going to die, and you yourself think so, I suppose nothing can alter it. And in that case, as I am an old man, I had better precede you to the other world; so I will go and commit suicide at once. I now take my leave of you."

Thus saying, Sakuzaemon left the room. Ieyasu bade one of his attendants call him back.

"Are you mad?" inquired Ieyasu, as Sakuzaemon entered the room again. "Though I am very ill, yet there is still some hope of my recovery. And even supposing that I die, that is no reason why you should be in such a hurry to follow me to the grave. Surely it is important that you should be left in the world to take charge of my children and to look after my affairs. It should be your endeavour to remain alive as long as possible. Is it not the height of folly for you to be talking of killing yourself?"

"Were I twenty years younger," replied Sakuzaemon, "I might do as you say, but I am now eighty years old. From my youth up I have been a man of war, fighting now with this army and now with that. One of my eyes has been destroyed by a sword cut;

several of my fingers have been injured; I have been made a cripple. In fact there is hardly a disability from which men suffer that I have not experienced; so that now there are few things that I can undertake, so crippled have I become. All this has been borne for your sake; and while you live I feel that I have something to live for. Under your fostering care I have plodded on all these years. While you live the name of Sakuzaemon will still be known and feared. If you die now I feel certain that the surrounding barons will attack and destroy your house. For if there be added to my age the trouble of having lost my master, I shall never be able to withstand the attacks that will be made on us. And when this comes about people may well ask, 'Why did Sakuzaemon consent to remain in the world after his master was dead to see all this trouble?' There was among Takeda Katsuyori's retainers a man called —— Asari who was very much esteemed by all who knew him. But when his lord's house was ruined, this man came over to you, and by all kinds of sycophancy tried to curry favour with the enemy of his late lord. The very sight of him offends me. I think to myself every time I see him, I will never consent to be like this man. I will never outlive the prosperity of my master."

Here Ieyasu interposed:—"What you say is very true. So, if you think that you can do anything to make me better, then by all means do it. I place myself in your hands. You may have me treated as you think best."

Thereupon Sakuzae-mon, the doctor of whom he had spoken, and who had been sent for by the burnt the carbuncle, and afterwards gave the patient some medicine; and he got better.

Sakuzae-mon nursed him all through his illness, and when he became thoroughly convalescent the old man wept tears of joy.

The strongest minds sometimes give way. Hitherto Ieyasu had refused to succumb to any of the numerous difficulties that had beset his path. But on the occasion of which I write he seems to have lost all his usual invincibility of spirit, and had it not been for the presence and tact of Sakuzae-mon it is very probable that the great hero would have ended his career at this time. Life or death often depends on the presence or absence of a strong determination to live if it be possible to do so. Where the disease is not a fatal one, the patient's recovery is immensely facilitated and hastened by buoyancy and hopefulness of spirit.

It is said that carbuncles have a peculiarly depressing effect upon the mind. This may partly account for Iyeyasu's fit of despondency. The depression did not last long, however. The spirit that had been the main-spring of all the great acts of the Shōgun's life was revived by the words of his aged councillor and the hero was himself again.

VII.

IEYASU'S MESSAGE TO NARUSE HAYATO.

Just before the Ōsaka Castle was taken Ieyasu went up the Cha-usu hill in order to see how things were going on inside the castle grounds. He noticed that the garrison was very much reduced, consisting of no more than four or five hundred men, who were all assembled in one spot. So he gave orders that an attack should be commenced on the castle without delay.

His order, for some reason or other, was not promptly carried out by Naruse Hayato, the general in command of the troops. Ieyasu, seeing the delay, sent a messenger to Hayato. "Go," said Ieyasu to the messenger. "to that coward Naruse Hayato and tell him to take my son Yoshinao to attack the castle at once."

The messenger went to Hayato, and repeated the

message just as it had been delivered to him, and that before Yoshinao and a number of other persons.

Hayato was very angry. Before the messenger had concluded his message, with a loud voice he replied:—"The Hayato whom you address has no recollection of ever having acted the coward on any one occasion throughout his whole life. But ask your master whether he did not act the coward when fighting with Takeda Shingen?"

After the castle had been taken and the war was over, Hayato went to see Ieyasu, and, referring to what had occurred, said:—"During the siege of the Ōsaka castle you sent a command to me to attack the castle, and because you thought I was slow in commencing the assault, you became very angry and called me a coward. I have been in your service ever since I was a child; and therefore I should not be offended by anything that you might say to me when you and I are alone. But your messenger came and repeated your message in public, before all my followers and in the presence of your son. Why you chose a man to bear your message who had no more sense than that man I cannot tell. It makes little matter to me personally what you are pleased to say of me, but, as you know, all the Owari people look up to me as a pillar that supports

your son, and a speech such as that you made is calculated to make my followers lose faith in me and to lead your son to look down on me. It was on this account that I publicly used abusive language in reference to you; for had I remained silent, I should have lost all my influence with my followers."

"Under such circumstances whatever you might have said would not have been amiss," replied Ieyasu. "I am not offended by your conduct. I see that it was your great regard for my household that prompted you to act as you did."

Ieyasu's message was a most injudicious one, and with any one less magnanimous than Hayato it might have had serious consequences. But it was well that Ieyasu had the sense to acknowledge himself in the wrong when the matter was brought up by Hayato after the war was over.

VIII.

REMARKABLE SELF-CONTROL.

Hiratsuka Etchū-no-Kami, a daring man who feared nothing, while wandering about the country as a knight-errant, was urged by messengers from Ieyasu to enter his service.

"Ieyasu is stingy," he replied; "although he uses polite language to his subordinates, the emoluments he bestows are very scanty."

This remark was reported to Ieyasu, and he was very much annoyed by it.

Etchū-no-Kami joined Ishida Mitsunari, and fought against Ieyasu at the battle of Sekigahara. Mitsunari was defeated, and Etchū-no-Kami was taken prisoner and brought before Ieyasu.

Ieyasu was pleased to see Etchū-no-Kami brought to him in such an ignominious way and, as he approached, jeeringly remarked:—"Your refusing to serve the stingy man and choosing to follow Mitsunari, looked at in the light of recent events, proves to have been a very wise course! Eh?"

Etchū-no-Kami's countenance changed, and a fierce, angry look came over him as he replied:—"For a knight to be taken captive is not so rare an occurrence that you need speak in this way. Was not the man who now jeers at me for coming here as a prisoner of war a captive himself when but a lad? And was he not in after years taken prisoner by Toda Danjō and sent to Oda Nobunaga, who shut him up in the Owari castle for three years? To forget that we ourselves have been in captivity and to laugh at others when in the same state, is a very

extraordinary proceeding, I must confess."

Ieyasu was enraged by these remarks, and exclaimed :—"You abominable scoundrel! I have a mind to cut off your head on the spot. But,—no, you shall not die so easily; you shall be spared that you may undergo suffering."

Some little time after this, when Ieyasu was in a good humour, Honda Hachiya asked him why he had spared Etchū-no-Kami. "Seeing that he was so insolent," remarked Hachiya, "it would only have been doing what was natural if you had killed him on the spot."

"Etchū-no-Kami is a brave man the like of whom it would be difficult to find," replied Ieyasu. "And he is as intelligent and eloquent as he is brave. Supposing I had killed him on the spot, it would have amounted to no more than a temporary gratification of my angry feelings, and would have been prompted only by his insulting remarks to me. Had I killed him, I should have regretted it ever after. Regarded in another light my keeping him alive was a wise measure. It is not to be supposed that because such a rare man does not care to serve me he will not be of use to others in the world. My son Hidetada will stand in need of such men as Etchū-no-Kami after I am dead, and he will do well to make use of him."

Ieyasu's command over himself on this occasion was

very remarkable. When his rage was at its height and when we expect to hear that he appeased it in the way that in the age in which he lived was considered most proper, namely, by taking summary vengeance on the cause of it, we find that he suddenly checks himself and allows reason to resume the authority over his actions which had been temporarily wielded by passion.

In refusing to make a personal insult an excuse for taking a man's life, Ieyasu obeyed a higher moral code than that followed by those who in later days in civilised countries have fought desperate duels for no other reason than to wipe off the imaginary reproach which some insulting remark was supposed to entail on them.

IX.

IEYASU PROHIBITS THE OBSERVANCE OF A FOOLISH CUSTOM.

It happened once that when the Owari daimyo, Matsudaira Tadayoshi, came up to Edo on Government service, he grew very ill. He consulted a great many physicians, and Ieyasu himself paid him a good deal of attention and recommended several skilful doctors to him. The treatment he received did him some good, and the Shōgun, seeing that he was a little better, advised him

to return to Owari and try what rest would do. He set out for his home, but only got as far as Shinagawa when he died.

Three of his chief retainers wished to show their regard for him by following him to the grave, and purposed committing suicide, according to the custom that still prevailed in certain daimates. This was reported to Ieyasu.

Ieyasu immediately remarked to his councillors:—
“This must be stopped at once. You had better inform them that the proceeding is displeasing to the Government. But if you don’t care to do this, then say that I disapprove of it. Anyhow such a practice must be suppressed. It is, I know, in accordance with the idea of the ancients, but it is a senseless custom. If a man’s regard for his master is so great that he is prepared to die for him, let him show his feeling of attachment by serving his successors. If a master is in danger, it is very praiseworthy for a servant to die in his stead. But to die without a good object in view, in the way that those do who commit suicide because their master is dead, is to die like a dog. This custom would never have been observed so long had there been no foolish barons to give it encouragement. I am happy to see, however, that by degrees the various lords of the land are beginning to perceive what a foolish practice

it is, and are forbidding its observance in their dominions, but its abolition is still far from universal."

X.

A FEW OF IEYASU'S MORAL SAYINGS.

Man's life is like a journey. He has a heavy load to carry and a long way to travel; he must proceed slowly.

If he ever bear in mind that his normal condition here is one in which a great deal of inconvenience must be put up with, he will never know what it is to be discontented.

When his heart is full of expectation, let it be tempered by the remembrance of the trouble through which he has passed.

Let him be patient and enduring, and nothing can happen to injure him to the end of time.

Let him look upon anger as his enemy. If he knows what it is to conquer, and knows not what it is to be defeated, some mischief must overtake him.

Let him reprove himself rather than reprove others.

Let him bear in mind that not to reach a thing aimed at is preferable to going to excess in anything.





CHAPTER III.

It is important to bear in mind that though few of the Tokugawa Laws are still in force, and though the old methods of administration have been abandoned, the notions on which the legal system of those days was founded still prevail, and there are scholars even of the calibre of the late Mr. Naitō Chiso who maintain that all attempts to weaken the hold which Confucian ideas have on the minds of the Japanese people are to be regarded as a retrograde movement bound sooner or later to lead to disastrous results. Such scholars assert that the smoothness with which the machinery of government worked in the Tokugawa era was solely owing to the ethical basis on which the laws enacted were known to rest, and the consequent mental satisfaction felt in submitting to them.* Such methods as were employed by the Tokugawa Shōguns, argues this school of writers, have never been surpassed anywhere, if their merit is tested by the fruits they produced. Whether the Tokugawa *regime*

* For a full account of the connection of Confucian teaching with the Tokugawa Government *vide* my review of Dr. Inoue Tetsujirō's *Nihon Chutss* (朱子) *Gakuha no Tetsugaku* in the *Japan Weekly Mail* of May 5th, 1906.

as a whole was more productive of good than harm is too wide a subject to be discussed here. But of the depth and extent of its influence on the whole of Japanese social life no student of Japanese history entertains a doubt.

The two and a half centuries during which the Tokugawa Shōgunate flourished may be designated as the age of interference. The Government left no social region unexplored. The family circle was constantly under its surveillance and trifling domestic quarrels were referred to it for settlement. The judges and magistrates of those days were preachers as well as legal administrators, and a perusal of such reports of law cases as are extant reveals the fact that the morality or immorality of actions, rather than their legality or illegality, was the chief subject of inquiry with the Tokugawa judge. The laws issued were of the vaguest description, savouring more of the character of moral precepts and exhortations than of laws. They were all based on the fundamental principle of Confucianism—the submission of the younger to the elder, of children to parents, wives to husbands, and so on. With the judge who administered these laws the relationship of the litigants determined the nature of the verdict. Individual rights as such were not recognized. In this system the body politic and the body social were rendered

interdependent. Men's social acts were invariably controlled and guided so as to be made to subserve political ends. The law of subjection to superiors was enforced with uniform rigidity throughout the empire, and all attempts to act in defiance of this law, even in cases where the offender was some obscure peasant, entailed the severest penalties. The harshness of the system did not strike those who lived under it as it does us to-day. They were of opinion that it was but the carrying into practice of the precepts of Confucianism. They regarded the Law and its administrators as champions of a code of morals to which all alike were bound to submit. The authority of this code was as little questioned by the Japanese subject of the Tokugawa era as the authority of the Bible is by the sincere and earnest, orthodox Christian to-day. Law and Morality were to the men of those days synonymous terms. Tokugawa legislators themselves saw no distinction between them.

In order to give readers of this book some idea of the character of these laws I have selected a few from a collection which has been published. As will be seen, many of them are of the vaguest description; others have reference to culture, education, social entertainments, or personal behaviour.

The following were promulgated in the various fields in 1615, a year before Ieyasu's death:—

I.—Literature, war, archery, and horsemanship are to be the avouirite pursuits of all soldiers.

II.—Liquor, feasts, and licentiousness of all kinds are forbidden.

III.—Any soldier in the employ of a *daimyō* or a *shōmyō* guilty of murder shall be banished from the dominion of the *daimyō* or *shōmyō* where the offence was committed.

IV.—The *samurai* of all domains are to practice economy.

The subjoined are the regulations passed between 1632 and 1634:—

I.—*Samurai* are to be careful to do nothing that is out of keeping with their social status.

II.—*Samurai* are forbidden to form cabals, to assist those formed, or to take part in suppressing them.

III.—*Samurai* are to cultivate filial piety and loyalty, to pay great attention to the laws of politeness and to avoid violating established customs.

IV.—*Samurai* are not allowed to possess a number of useless weapons. They are strictly forbidden to keep more things by them than they absolutely need. They are forbidden to sell things for the sake of obtaining a profit.

Acting on the notion that it was the duty of the State to enforce the practice of filial piety and loyalty to superiors, various laws and regulations were passed specifying the manner in which disputes between relations and masters and servants should be settled. A regulation drawn up for the use of judges states that in all disputes between parents and children, the will of the parent, and in dissensions between masters and servants, the will of the master, should determine the decision of the judge.

The following laws were promulgated in 1655-7:—

I.—A parent's debts must be paid by his children, but children's debts need not be paid by parents unless the written consent of relations to the incurring of such debts be obtained.

II.—Any child who refuses to obey its parents, or who disobeys the town elders or members of the *gonin-gumi* (5 men guild), shall be arrested and imprisoned. The conduct of the child while in confinement shall be closely watched, and if there are proofs of great innate wickedness, the child will be disinherited. If such a child, after its release from prison, show any signs of enmity to its parents on account of what has happened, it will be the duty of the whole village or town in which it resides to arrest it and to put it to death.

It was quite common in those days for children to be imprisoned for unfilial conduct. If they persisted in opposing a parent's wishes they were liable to be condemned to death. It was open to the parents to save their children from the extreme penalty of the law. In case this took place, the common practice was to hand the child over to the relations and the neighbours of its parents and to allow them to beat it into submission to parental authority.

Among the laws issued by Itakura Suwo-no-Kami, the following are worth quoting, if only to show the rigid manner in which the principles alluded to above were put into practice:—

I.—In disputes between parents and children, when a child appeals to a court of law against its parent, it may be decided without going into the details of the case that the child is in the wrong. Even supposing that the faults of a parent are of a most aggravated character, for a child to make these faults the subject of public accusation is most

unfilial.* Even in the cases of persons who are not specially related to each other, the obligation of the young to subject themselves to the old is universally recognized. Death shall be the penalty incurred by the child who goes to law against its parent. Its life can only be saved by the intercession of its parent.

11.—The above law will hold good in the case of children who bring charges against their grand-parents or uncles. A grandson or a nephew has only to consider what is the relationship which he bears to the one whom he accuses in order to see that he is in the wrong.

All laws were framed so as not to do violence to filial piety. Even in cases where laws had been broken, if it could be shown that the offence was committed out of regard for a parent it was overlooked. Children were never expected to furnish information to the authorities implicating their parents or other relatives. But they were allowed to testify to their innocence. Itakura Suwo-no-Kami gave it as his opinion that in cases where the suitors were equally right and it was difficult to determine in whose favour a verdict should be given, if in the course of the trial it leaked out that one of the suitors was unfilial, disloyal, or unkind, judgment should be given against him. "This," said Itakura, "may involve in some cases a departure from strict justice, but, since it preserves the feelings which ought to exist between relations, it promotes the general welfare of the public."

To show how universal was the opinion that a man's duty to the State was to be made subservient to his duty

* *Vide supra*. p 425 and 430.

to individuals, we may quote the case of the official examination of Tokugawa Nariaki. When Ii Kamon found that the open opposition to foreign intercourse shown by this baron was likely to seriously interfere with the success of his negotiations with foreign Powers, relying on the testimony of two of Nariaki's retainers, Kasujima, and Kayanei, Ii prohibited Nariaki from taking part in public affairs. This use of evidence extracted from retainers against their lord was considered at the time a most unwarrantable proceeding, and drew forth a strong protest from the Head of the Finance Bureau, Kimura Keizō, who, however, paid dearly for his boldness, for he was subsequently degraded from office and sent to Kii.

It was one of the principles of the Tokugawa rule that legal decisions should not be made public. In the days of Hidetada a magistrate called Shimada Yuyu, who had been administering justice for 20 years, purposed publishing full accounts of the cases which had come before him. This was forbidden by the Shōgun, who acted on the advice of the *Gorojū*, or Chief Councillors of State. The ground of the objection is worth recording. It was contended that since the verdict in each case must depend on the facts elicited, and since these facts cannot possibly coincide in any two cases, it would only lead to mistakes were the decisions of judges to be based on ver-

dicts pronounced by others. The process of generalization is one which the legal expert must use sparingly. Every case must be decided on its own special merits, and the power to detect those merits is one whose development would be seriously hindered were the habit of resting verdicts on precedents to become common. Such was the view of the legislators of the Tokugawa era. There is no denying that, whether owing to the method in which they were expected to administer justice or as the result of other influences, no era of Japanese history produced a finer set of judges than those who served the Bakufu. The written laws which guided their decisions were few, and such as existed were so loosely worded as to be capable of the most varied interpretation. In the majority of cases which came before the courts social custom, political considerations, and the current ethical code, rather than any written law bearing on the case *sub judice*, swayed the mind of the judge. The liberty granted to judges was seldom abused; for the reason that the choice of men to fill the post of magistrate or judge was in most cases very wise. If the administration of an officer of justice was on the whole deemed satisfactory, he was allowed to resort to such methods of defending the innocent against the penalties of an inadvertently violated law as fancy dictated. A girl called Kiyo, who had

killed her mother under the impression that she was killing a fiend, was brought before Ōoka Tadasuke Echizen-no-Kami. In order to convince the public that the girl had committed no crime, Tadasuke made use of a popular superstition relating to transformation. "Evidently it is a beast in human form that has been killed," said the judge. "In my opinion Kiyo's mother must have somehow or other been killed by a fox or a badger, and the animal must afterwards have assumed the mother's form. People who know nothing about such things will perhaps fancy that Kiyo has killed her mother; but such is not the case. It is an evil spirit that she has killed, in fact, the spirit of the animal that killed her mother; and so she has avenged her mother's death. If the corpse were left for twenty-four hours after death, I have no doubt it would assume the shape from which it transformed itself, namely, the shape of a fox or a badger. But if it were left and allowed thus to change and Kiyo and others were to see the change, their feelings would be harrowed thereby. Kiyo would grieve to think that the one whom she had been serving as a parent was nothing more than an animal; and others would, when they heard of this say: — 'How are we to know that our parents are not transformed animals?' This being the case it will be best for

all parties that the creature be buried out of sight as soon as possible."

Were I asked to state in a few words what was the chief element of strength in the Bakufu Government, I should reply, the skill with which it used men. The genius of Ieyasu, like that of Hideyoshi, seemed to reveal itself most in the discernment of character and ability. This power was inherited by Iemitsu and was handed down to subsequent generations, and hence the judicial appointments of the Tokugawa era constitute one among many good results of the exercise of that power. But that the Bakufu laws were grievously defective and in many ways entirely antagonistic to western notions of justice admits of no doubt. They sacrificed the weak to the strong. They defended the old against the young, and treated woman as a nonentity. They did much to perpetuate the demerits as well as the merits of the Confucian system of ethics. The results of their influence are conspicuous on all sides to-day.*

* The late Mr. Lowder's Translation of a treatise called the Legacy of Ieyasu has been republished by the Methodist Publishing Company. The comments of Mr. W. E. Grigsby on the document translated by Mr. Lowder published in Vol. III of the Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan are of considerable interest.



APPENDIX TO TALE VIII

The *Hatamoto*.

THIS term applied to certain vassals of the Tokugawa Shōguns who ranked next to the *daimyō*. This class of warriors was created by Tokugawa Ieyasu. The number of *hatamoto* is doubtful, but there were probably more than 2,000. Some writers assert that there were 80,000, being deceived by a boastful saying of one of the Tokugawa Shōguns "My *hatamoto* number 80,000 and my *gokenin** are not to be counted." Their incomes were always below 10,000 *koku* a year. Some of them were territorial nobles, but others had no territory and only received small incomes from the Shōgun. Seven of the provincial *hatamoto* were placed on the same footing as the *daimyō* in regard to alternate residence on their country estates and in Edo, while the rest were obliged to reside permanently in the Shōgun's capital. The former were called *kōtai* (交代) *hatamoto*, alternating *hatamoto*, the latter *hira-hatamoto*, ordinary *hatamoto*.

* An intermediate class between the *hatamoto* and the ordinary *samurai*.

In the Tokugawa 禁令考, *Kinreikō*, Vol. III., we find various regulations respecting the lives and occupations of the *hatamoto*. They are called *Hatamoto Hatto* (法度) or *Shoshi* (諸士) *Hatto*, Laws, but they do not take a legal form. They merely consist of moral directions. They teach filial piety, loyalty, courteousness in manner, frugality and simplicity of life and devotion to duty. They condemn all kinds of extravagance and vulgar display in household utensils or furniture and in dress. All necessary ceremonies such as marriages are to be conducted in the simplest way possible. Above all, these regulations enjoin whole-hearted devotion to masters and lords even in cases where the master may be bent on doing something of which the servant disapproves.* Servants who have shown disloyalty to one master should not be employed by another, but should be regarded as disgraced for life. *Hatamoto* are warned against mixing themselves up with quarrels that do not concern them. They are instructed to bequeath their property to adopted sons in case they have no sons of their own. They are exhorted to main-

* The observance of this rule by all *samurai* in ancient times often conduced to the commission of fearful outrages. When Saitō Kuranosuke, the retainer of Akechi Mitsuhide, was told by his master of his intention to kill Oda Nobunaga, Kuranosuke strongly disapproved of the course Mitsuhide was bent on following, but he did not on that account forsake his master. Masters must be obeyed and followed even when they do evil, argued the warriors of old Japan in the majority of cases.

tain a high standard of conduct—to live and act in such a manner that people may be able to say, “As the cherry-blossom is the chief of flowers; so is the warrior the best of men (*Hito wa bushi; hana wa sakura*). The *katamoto* is forbidden to trade or even to keep in his house more things than are required for daily use. To any kind of profit he must be supremely indifferent. The driving of a hard bargain is something to which he should never stoop.

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JAPAN IN DAYS OF YORE.

IX.

THE TRIUMPH OF VIRTUE OVER VICE.

CHAPTER I.

AMONG the noted trials reported in the *Ō-oka Meiyo Seidan* there is one known as the Echigo Denkichi case, which furnishes a large amount of information on the condition of the lower classes during the first half of the eighteenth century.

Echigo Denkichi* was the only son of Kudō Dengo, and was born in the village of Takarada, situated about twenty miles from the castle-town of Takata, Echigo. For generations the heads of the Kudō family were large land-owners and held the office of mayor or head of the village of Takarada. But some time during the early youth of the hero of my tale, through a series of misfortunes which it would take too long to relate, Denkichi's father lost his land and became poor.

At the age of sixteen Denkichi found himself fatherless in the world. Now, Denkichi being of a meek

* Known also as Kudō Denkichi, but Echigo Denkichi is his usual title.

and retiring disposition, seemed ill adapted to bear the many reverses which were in store for him. With a quiet persistence, however, he applied himself to his daily toil and earned money enough to support his mother comfortably, whom he treated in the most filial manner. His neighbours beheld with admiration the devotion with which he attended to her every want. He had a well-to-do relation called Kamidai Hyōjō, who occupied the post of mayor in Takarada. But Hyōjō was one of those men who regard with indifference the poverty of relations. So he did nothing to assist the Denkichi family.

Denkichi's mother had a sister to whom her father's property had been bequeathed. Concerning this sister the mother during her last illness remarked to Denkichi, "She is a bad woman, but she may reform, and if so I trust that you and she will prove to be of assistance to each other."

Shortly after this Denkichi's mother died, and he was left to get through the world as best he could. He hired himself out as a farm-labourer and for some time succeeded in making two ends meet.

One day he was asked whether he would go to Edo with a message. Being a good walker and fond of seeing new places, he agreed to go. On his way to Utsunomiya, near Kōnosu, he observed, sitting by the roadside,

a woman and a girl. They had evidently been engaged in weeding rice. As Denkichi passed them, he seemed to have a dim recollection of having seen the woman somewhere. At once the thought struck him that it might be his aunt; he had not seen her for many years, so was not sure that it was she. On inquiry he found that his surmises were correct: this was no other than his aunt Haya and her daughter Ume. To them he made himself known. He found them in a great state of poverty. The feelings with which Haya regarded this interview are described by the narrator as resembling those of a person who meets a divinity in hell. On his way back from Edo Denkichi spent a day or two in Haya's house, after which he took her and her daughter back to Takarada with him.

For many years Denkichi worked hard and succeeded in maintaining his household. When Ume reached the age of seventeen, her mother requested one of her friends to sound Denkichi as to whether he would be willing to marry Ume.*

Denkichi agreed to the proposal, and the parties concerned, seeing no object in postponing the marriage,

* This is strictly in accordance with the custom of the country. As a rule no respectable engagement can take place without the intervention of what is called the middleman (*Nakōdo*).

arranged that it should be performed at once. Simple enough was the ceremony. The bride and bridegroom drank about a pint of *sake*, ate a long potatoe (in the hopes of attaining to longevity), and some boiled fish.*

Denkichi's diligence and praiseworthy conduct attracted the observation of every one in the village, and at last Hyōji, influenced by the general feeling, commenced to be friendly with the family; and his son, Chōjirō, frequently visited the house.

For three years after his marriage Denkichi persevered; but the times were hard, and he found it impossible to lay by money against a rainy day. Though he was regarded with favour by the villagers, he was far too proud to be dependent on any one for support.

One day, while thinking over these things, he said to himself:—"With no children to maintain I only just manage to live, suppose I were to have two or three children to keep, where should I be? 'Tis no use to go on in this way. Wages are low. I will proceed to Edo and work hard for five or six years and accumulate a good sum of money." He made known his resolve to his wife and her mother.

"It is because I am troublesome to you," remarked

* For full information on marriage in Japan in ancient times *vide* Appendix.

his mother-in-law, "that you speak thus. What are we to do when you are away? We are dependent on you for our daily food."

"I am not going to Edo for pleasure, but for work," replied Denkichi. "I find it impossible to maintain you here. What I propose doing is to go to Edo and work hard for five or six years and then come back and commence to repurchase the land which formerly belonged to the family, and so perhaps prepare the way for my becoming the mayor of the village. In treading in the footsteps of my ancestors I shall act the part of a filial son. Here is a sum of money that will suffice to maintain you for a year. By the end of that time I expect to be in a position to send money from Edo. It may seem a long time for me to be away; but days and months fly as rapidly as an arrow from the bow. Do you two do your best to make what money you can. You can work the loom, pick cotton, and do a number of other things, and as the saying is, 'Dust accumulated becomes a mountain,'* so, if you manage well, you ought to be able to make a good deal."

Thus saying, after worshipping at his mother's tomb, with a small basket strapped to his back, Denkichi set

* *Chiri tsumotte, yama to naru.*

out for Edo on the 10th day of the ninth month of the third year of Kyōhō (1718 A.D.). But, delayed by the farewell visits it was necessary to pay, he did not get away till the afternoon of that day, and was benighted before he reached the place at which he intended to put up for the night. But it being a moonlight night, regardless of the late hour, he hastened on his way. On reaching Kashiwabara, in Shinano, he noticed something glittering in the moonlight as it lay on the road. He found it to be a tortoise-shell comb with several of its teeth gone. Picking up the comb, he had walked on a quarter of a mile when he met a girl about twelve or thirteen years old, who asked him to put up at her inn. Denkichi thought it strange that so young a girl should be acting as a tout in such a desolate place at so late an hour.

"Well, since it is late and I am tired," said Denkichi, "it makes little difference where I put up." Thus saying, he followed the girl to her house. He found that she lived in a most dilapidated place. The doors were all smashed, the supports of the house were crooked, the cross beams of the roof had sunk, the courtyard was all covered with grass. On entering the house and examining its condition, he noticed that its interior agreed well with its exterior. He thought first that he had better leave

the place at once, but having accepted the maid's offer, he was unwilling to do so. The girl brought him some lukewarm water to wash his feet; and afterwards, producing an old greasy pillow, handed it to him and asked him to lie down and rest himself while she prepared his meal.

Denkichi lay down, but not to sleep. In the first place he was hungry; in the second, he had his doubts as to the nature of the house in which he found himself. Could this be an inn? It looked as though it had been one, but had been allowed to lapse into a state of ruin. The ceiling was covered with cobwebs; the plaster had fallen from the walls, leaving the bamboo laths all bare. Was it not a robber's haunt? And had not the girl been sent to entrap him? Had he not better look out for a way of escape? He arose and tried to push back one of the rain-shutters, to see what kind of a place it was outside. But the shutter had not been used for some time, and it required all his strength to get it to move, and when it did move, it moved in the wrong direction, the result being that Denkichi was precipitated on his face and hands into the courtyard below. The noise made by the fall of the shutter attracted the attention of the girl, who called out, "If you are going out anywhere, please be careful that you

don't get hurt. The house is in a terribly rotten condition."

As Denkichi was rubbing his knees, which had been slightly bruised by the fall, he heard a deep cough, which sounded as if it came from the chest of an invalid.

He peeped into the room from whence the noise proceeded, and there saw a man of about fifty years of age leaning on a heap of quilts quite exhausted by his fit of coughing. It was evident that he was a confirmed subject of disease; his face was drawn and emaciated, his beard had been allowed to grow long, he seemed to be in the last stage of consumption. "This is no

robber's house," said Denkichi to himself when he saw him. "This man is no doubt the maid's father."

With an easy mind he re-entered the house and, to stay the gnawings of hunger, began to smoke his pipe. He had only taken a few puffs when the maid announced that his meal was ready.

"Please take your meal leisurely, sir," said the girl. "I am sorry I am so late in bringing it. But I am quite alone in the house."

As Denkichi commenced to eat, his sympathies went out to the girl, for she seemed to have more work than she could get through. "In such a large house as this is ere no one employed to help you?" inquired Denkichi. "You have an invalid in the house, too, I perceive. Is

he your father? How is it that the place is so out of repair? It strikes me that the inmates of this house have seen better days. Am I not right?"

"It may seem very foolish to talk about things which cannot be altered," replied the girl, "but as you are desirous of hearing, I will tell you what has happened. The invalid you saw is my father. Our family was formerly in good circumstances. My mother died when I was only four years old, and not long after my father married again. My stepmother had the charge of everything, and gradually frittered away our property. Troubles never come alone; so, as ill-luck would have it, four years ago my father fell sick. His wife did nothing to help him—in fact, she made his sickness an opportunity for robbing us more than she had hitherto done. Three years ago she took her departure, and we have never seen her since. She had a daughter by her former husband. This girl left at the same time. They took advantage of our distress to enrich themselves, and then left us in the lurch. My father was so enraged by their conduct that even now he sometimes grinds his teeth and exclaims. 'Ungrateful beast that she was! I will have my revenge on her some day.' At such times he becomes so violent and agitated that I am at a loss what to say or do. I simply sit by his side and weep till my

eyes are dry. In days gone by we had friends; but their love was only cupboard love*. When we had no more to bestow on them, one after another they deserted us. In former days our inn was one of the favourite stopping-places of these parts; but now, owing to the dilapidated condition of the house, travellers fight shy of it. It has often happened that I have gone to the outskirts of the town and brought travellers to the house, only to find them turn away in disgust. That you have been good enough to stop here is something for which I feel very grateful, as it will enable me to buy medicine for my poor father."

Denkichi listened with intense interest to this tale of woe. "We all think our own case the worst," said he to himself, "but it is not so. I thought my troubles were bad enough, but those of this poor girl are infinitely worse."

"I wish I were in circumstances to help you," said Denkichi to the maid. "But the truth is I have only enough with me to take me to Edo." Then, after pausing to think whether there was anything he could give her, he continued: "There is one thing that I have that you might sell for something. I picked up

* The Japanese expression is *inshoku no tomo*.

a comb just now. It is made of tortoise-shell, so it will fetch something."

The girl, thanking Denkichì, took the comb and exclaimed:—"How extraordinary that you should have found this! I have been mourning over the loss of it for several days; because of all the things that my dear mother left me this is the only one that has not been sold. I have worn it in my hair as a memento of my mother's affection for me; and now it has come back to me again."

"Marvellous indeed!" said Denkichì to himself. "Here is a girl who not only serves her living parent with all her strength, but who feels towards her deceased mother as a filial child ought. What piety, mingled with what distress! Surely Heaven will be moved by the sight and send relief."

"Take courage, my girl," said Denkichì. "Depend upon it, brighter days will dawn upon you. I am going up to Edo to work hard for five or six years. On my way back I shall not fail to look you up. How shall I know where to find you? What is your name?"

"My father's name is Moritaya Gingorō: I am called Sen," replied the girl.

"What fiends there are in the world!" exclaimed Denkichì. "This stepmother and her daughter have es-

aped punishment so far, but vengeance will follow them wherever they go."

As they continued talking, a neighbouring temple bell informed them that it was midnight, and at the same time the father's voice summoned the girl to his side. Presently she returned with some very greasy bed-clothes, prepared Denkichi's bed and invited him to retire to rest.

He lay down, but the groans of the sick man and the footsteps of the girl as she moved about while attending to his wants kept him awake. The next morning he rose very early and prepared to start. Sen, who being so accustomed to the deathlike stillness which usually reigned in the house, was attracted by the slightest sound, at once heard him moving and begged him not to go without his breakfast.

He replied that he was in a hurry to get on and did not care for breakfast. Before he went he paid the ordinary charge for a night's lodging, namely, one hundred and thirty-two *mon*;* besides this he offered the girl two hundred *mon*.

This she refused; saying that the accommodation was poor and that she had done nothing to merit the gift.

*=*1 sen 3 rin 2 mō*. Seeing that this is about the thirtieth part of what is paid for a night's lodging now, we shall not be far wrong if we say that food costs thirty times as much as it did at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

Denkichi replied that it was a pleasure for him to give her the power of purchasing medicine for her father. As she persisted in refusing,* he placed the money under the quilt and took his departure.

* Persistent refusal of gifts even when eventually they are accepted is considered good form in Japan. To leave money in a man's room and walk away is quite a common practice among Japanese in cases where no other course is possible.



CHAPTER II

On the day when Edô Denkichi took up his quarters in Kôjimachi, feeling his first visit to the Shôgun's capital to be a thing of an impressive temperament, the superb materiality of the palmy and their magnificent robes and equipments filled him with wonder and admiration. The superb painting of the temples, the rich pile to the, arrayed in gaudy robes, paraded the streets, were also objects of attraction to Denkichi. Day by day, accompanied by a guide,† he feasted his eyes on the great sight of the city. Hearing that Asakusa was more worth seeing than any place else, Denkichi made his way to the temple of Kwannon and there fervently besought the goddess to direct his steps to the house of a good merchant.

The annual resort of strangers from the country at this time.

† p. 81.

In ancient times the guides of Edô were a very numerous class, and their occupation was a lucrative one. The superior and all-knowing in which they resumed when enlarging on town sights to country visitors, the way in which they succeeded in inducing their employers to patronize them on all occasions, sometimes keeping the innocent countryman in the dark while they enjoyed themselves, and yet, notwithstanding, the extreme deference with which these guides were treated by the nobles who hired them, form the subject of many a story in the popular literature of the eighteenth century.

Not long after this, he obtained a place as a rice pounder in a large tea-house not far from the Asakusa temple, owned by a man called Shirozaemon, where he was promised three *ryō* a year as wages and his food, and was granted the privilege of selling the empty rice bags.

Being a man with a steadfast purpose in life and fully persuaded that in the long run straightforward conduct brings its own reward, he was honest even to a cent, and served his master with more diligence than any one that had previously been in his employ. Shirozaemon watched him narrowly. He found on inquiry that Denkichi was in the habit of sending half of his wages to his wife and mother-in-law and of laying by the other half. Struck by this, Shirozaemon, who was a very straightforward man himself and a great admirer of honesty wherever he found it, thought that subsequently he would like to assist Denkichi, if he proved to be as upright as he appeared to be. Might he not, however, be deceived in him? His integrity might be only superficial like that of hundreds of others whom he knew. Denkichi might only be waiting for a good opportunity to rob him; he would put his honesty to the test. So, one day, he placed a *bu** in the rice which Denkichi was about to pound.

* A quarter of a *ryō*, or twenty five *sen*, a coin no longer in use. Paper *bu* were current 35 years ago.

Denkichi discovered the money and immediately took it to his master.

"You are an honest fellow," said Shirozaemon. "Though the rice is mine, of course I do not expect money to be found in it. You can look upon this coin, then, as a gift that Heaven has bestowed on you for your integrity."

"It is very good of you to regard it in this light," replied Denkichi; "but of course this money has an owner. It has been lost by some one and will be missed. I should like to find out its owner and return it. There is no reason why a man who has been in service such a short time as I should receive a reward from Heaven."

"Your probity fairly astonishes me," rejoined Shirozaemon.

"I put this money into the rice to see what you were made of; and now I give it to you as a reward for your honesty."

"If that be the case, then I accept it with thanks," replied Denkichi; "not that I am in want of money; for as you know, I am able to save half of my wages. The money that I realize by the sale of rice bags amounts to some five or six hundred *mon* a month. This suffices me for pocket money. Here, sir, is the account: you can see for yourself what bags I have sold."

Shirozaemon, still more impressed by this confession, immediately raised Denkichi to the rank of a house-boy and increased his wages. In this capacity it was his duty to attend to the guests that came to the tea-house.

It happened one day that a *samurai* who was stopping there complained of having lost some money. Being the worse for liquor, he was not to be appeased. With a loud voice he called out :—" This is a house that harbours thieves, I perceive. You do not seem to know that I am no other than than Itō Genjirō, a fencer of great renown. Do you think I am going to put up with daring robbery of this kind? I will....."

"Please, sir, compose yourself. Your money is not stolen," interposed Denkichi at this juncture. "How much have you lost?"

"Altogether three *ryō* and one *bu*," replied the *samurai*.

"The money is safe," said Denkichi. "Seeing that your Honour was tipsy, I thought it best to put it aside."

Denkichi went to the master of the house and asked him to lend him this amount. His own wages having been placed in Shirozaemon's keeping, the money was forthcoming at once. Denkichi took the money and handed it to the *samurai* and urged him to take a little more *sake*. Shortly after the *samurai*, while stirring the ashes, discovered his money.

He called Denkichi and apologized to him for the haste with which he had accused the inmates of the house of theft, and added that the money which Denkichi had found no doubt belonged to some other guest.

To which Denkichi replied,—"My saying that I had taken the money was only an invention of mine to save the credit of the establishment. Were it to go out to the world, it had been stolen from this house, we should get no more and lose our customers, so I thought it no less my duty to save my master's reputation by advancing the sum said to have been taken."

The *samurai*, overcome with astonishment to find a man of such low rank acting in so virtuous a manner, took a *ryō* out of his purse and offered it to Denkichi. At first Denkichi refused to take the money, but subsequently yielded to the persuasions of his fellow-servants.

After this Denkichi was trusted more and more, and he made money so rapidly that in the ninth month of the seventh year of Kyōhō [A. D. 1722] he found himself the owner of no less a sum than one hundred and twenty *ryō*. He now thought it high time to return to his native place and take steps to recover the family estates and re-establish the reputation of his house.

Shirozaemon, on being informed of this resolve, was sorry to have to part with such a faithful servant, but

fully appreciated Denkichi's motive in leaving his service, and as a token of his regard for him, gave him a present of ten *ryō*. Denkichi's fellow-servants both male and female were also liberal with their parting gifts,* so that Denkichi was worth one hundred and fifty *ryō* when he left the Shōgun's capital.

* These presents are called *hanamuke* or *sembetsu*.

CHAPTER III.

On the way to Echigo, Denkichi had to ascend the Usui pass. There was then, as now, a shrine at the top of the pass known as Gongen Sama.† Before the god he prostrated himself and asked for protection on his journey. It was not long before he needed it. He had descended the hill and was passing through a pine plantation when two men suddenly sprang out from behind a mile-post, and both presented a somewhat singular appearance. One was clothed in a very short jacket made of coarse cotton cloth. Around his waist he had a string of cash, and in his hand a pair of straw horse shoes. Stuck carelessly into the hair of the other man, was a skewer, on the end of which were a few dumplings. "We have been working all day without making any money, please give us something to eat", said one of the robbers, for such they were. "You appear to have a very heavy basket on your back." Here one of them put his hand on the basket.

Removing the robber's hand, Denkichi replied:—"I am too accustomed to pass along the Nakasendō to allow of my being robbed on the way."

† This name is applied to shrines erected in honour of special stations of gods. The *Gongen* are inferior to the *Gm* or *Miya*.

"A powerful pedestrian, eh!" remarked one of the robbers sarcastically. "It is our trade to carry people's baggage, and there is no need for you to be so severe with us." Here one of them stood across his path and said:—"We want to carry your basket, and we mean to do it too."

Denkichi attempted to escape, but found it impossible to get away from the men. They kept close to the basket, and it came to a regular struggle as to who should have it. One of the men struck Denkichi with the branch of a pine-tree and brought him to the ground. Just as the robbers were in the act of taking the basket, a traveller appeared and forthwith rushed to Denkichi's rescue. One of the robbers he seized and threw to a great distance; the other he sent reeling to the ground with a heavy blow on the head. "What! thieving in broad daylight? You detestable creatures!" exclaimed the new arrival. "You care nothing for your heads, I suppose."

"Please forgive us," answered the robbers. "Though we may not be able to get a drop to drink, we must see to it that we do not lose our lives."

"I will let you off this time," said the new arrival; "but see to it that you mend your ways. This traveller is my companion." Then turning to Denkichi, he said:—"Come along, sir, we will travel together."

They had accompanied each other for about three miles when Denkichi, seeing that the robbers were not following, turned to his companion and said:—"I do not know how to thank you enough for your kindness to me."

The expression of the man's face as he listened to these words struck Denkichi as crafty and sinister in the extreme, and he felt sure that he had, as the saying is, "but escaped the venomous snake to be seized by the alligator." Hence shortly afterwards he said:—"I have a companion for whom I wish to wait here, so do you please go on ahead."

"It is no use your trying to deceive me in this way," replied the man. "You are travelling alone. I saw you when you crossed Itabashi; there was no one with you. I have a good many relations in Echigo. I am going to the same part of the country as that for which you are bound. Since I have some money with me and I have no doubt you have too, we shall both be benefited by travelling together."

Denkichi's suspicions were increased by this remark, but having been protected by this man and being now in his hands, he thought there was nothing to be done but consent to the arrangement for the time being. This

pedestrian was one of those robbers known as *Goma-no-kai*.*

They continued their journey together and put up at the same inn at night. Denkichi felt that he might be robbed at any moment, so, after being on the alert all the night, he rose very early in the morning, and, while his companion was getting ready to start, made off and hurried on his way alone for about six miles. "At last I have got rid of him," he exclaimed and, drawing a long breath, looked about for a seat. He saw a resting booth a little distance off, and was making for it, when, lo and behold! lounging at his ease, *there* was the robber awaiting his arrival. The latter had reached the spot by an unfrequented short cut. "Ah!" exclaimed the highwayman, "I have been looking for you everywhere, and was just resting here in the hopes of your turning up. Come, we will go on together!"

Denkichi thought to himself, "The only thing that I can do is to keep with other people as much as possible." So day after day he asked people when they were going and travelled with them. In this way he proceeded as far as Nojiri, where he put up at an inn called Omiya, kept by one—Yosōji. Here Denkichi

* A class of highwaymen who disguised themselves by dressing like ordinary travellers.

determined to try and get rid of his leech somehow or other.

Among the waitresses at the inn there was one whose face he thought he remembered. To her he said:—"I have a dim recollection of having seen you somewhere; where I cannot tell."

"I too," replied the girl "have seen you before. Are you not Mr. Denkichi, who stopped at the Moritaya some four years ago?"

"A rare occurrence, indeed! Then you are Osen. I have been up to Edo and am now on my way home. How is it that you are here? Where is your father?"

"My father is dead," she replied. "I stayed in the house for forty-nine days after my parent's decease* and then, as it was no longer possible to live in the house, I sold it and applied for and obtained a place in this inn. Let me thank you again for your kindness to me. The money you gave me was most useful. It was worth more to me than a thousand *ryō* at any ordinary time."

Denkichi managed to inform Sen of the difficulty that he was in, and she arranged so that they could confer together as to the means of his escape from the

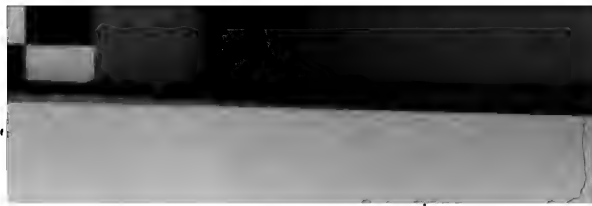
* It is customary for children to keep to the house forty-nine days after their parent's death, the only exception being frequent visits to the tomb of the deceased.

danger. The result of their conference was that Sen suggested that Denkichi should entrust his money to her. This Denkichi agreed to do, and forthwith handed over all his fortune to the girl, feeling sure that she was both trustworthy and cautious.

On receiving the money, Sen, taking from her head the comb which Denkichi had picked up, said :—" I give you this as a surety. To any one that brings this comb I will deliver the money."

" It seems to me," continued Sen, " that as long as you keep in the company of this man your life will be in danger, and therefore what I propose is that to-night you leave your baggage in his hands and pretend to make your escape. I will secrete you in the house. The robber will find you have left and will most assuredly set out to follow you up. After he has gone on his way you can travel home quietly."

To this scheme Denkichi agreed. After conversing with the robber as usual, they both lay down. The man feigned to be asleep, in order to throw Denkichi off his guard. After the robber had snored for a little while, Denkichi arose and left the room. " Now is my time," said the highwayman, and springing up, he packed his own things and those of Denkichi's in one bundle, strapped it on his back, and went out



into the court-yard with the intention of making his escape.

But Sen had taken the precaution of putting all manner of obstacles in the passage that she expected the robber to go through. She had piled up wood and placed empty tubs and the like in his way. Over these the man fell, making a great racket. Sen, who had been awake all night, heard this, and calling out:—"Thieves! Thieves!" roused the landlord and the guests: and the robber was arrested. Denkichi was during this time hiding in Sen's room. Inquiries were at once made for him. What could have become of him? "He no doubt was a robber too", remarked one of the guests. As nothing could be done that night, they bound the culprit and awaited the dawn of day.

At daybreak inquiry was made as to what was missing in the inn, and it was found that no one had lost anything. And since none but Sen knew the facts of the case, and she did not feel that it would be prudent to disclose them till the robber was away, the innkeeper agreed to let the suspect escape. So, leading him to the outskirts of the village, by way of inducing him to lead a better life in future, the inmates of the inn all slapped or punched him as hard as they could and then set him free.

After the robber had taken his departure, Sen made known to her master the real state of the case. The master was pleased with the sagacity she had shown. Denkichi, after allowing time for the robber to get well away, reached Takarada by a circuitous and unfrequented route without encountering any further difficulty.



CHAPTER IV.

On Denkichi's return to Takarada, he went around to each house and thanked the inmates for the kindness they had shown to his family during his absence.* Not long after, his mother-in-law remarked one day:—"You have been away all this time, and seem to have come back without anything. You have not even brought a small parcel with you." Whereupon Denkichi related the particulars of what had occurred.

After hearing which, Haya said:—"You have done well to get all this money. This comb is as good as the money itself, so I advise you to present it to the household gods and thank them for the help you have received."

This Denkichi did. They all three knelt together before the image of the household god and offered up thanks to him for the favours they had received. Thinking that, with no one but his wife and mother in the house, the comb would be safe enough, Denkichi allowed it to remain on the altar and retired to rest.

* It was customary in ancient times for such persons to bid farewell to all the villagers before setting out on a journey and to make a small present at each house on returning. This custom is still observed in old-fashioned places.

The next morning when he awoke the comb was gone. He at once made inquiries of his wife and her mother as to what had become of it, but they both said that they knew nothing about it. Denkichi searched high and low, but failed to find it. So he said to himself: "Sen is a very intelligent girl: though I may not have the comb, she will not withhold the money from me. I will go and fetch it."

On arrival at Nojiri, he found that the money had already been delivered. "A man called Yatahachi," observed Sen, "arrived early this morning, produced the comb and demanded the money. Having told you that I would give the money to any person who brought the comb, of course I could not refuse to deliver it to this man." Then, after a pause, she added, "Well, you seem fated to be robbed."

"Indeed I do," replied Denkichi. "The labour of years has been all in vain! Alas! it would seem as though Heaven were opposed to my accumulating money!" Denkichi's distress was pitiable to behold. He looked utterly bewildered and sat staring into vacancy.

"You need not be so despondent over the affair" observed Sen. "Although it may appear rude of me to say so, doubtless your wife has been unfaithful to you during your absence. It is very plain that no one outside

of your household would steal a comb placed on the family altar. And even if an outsider stole it, how could such a person tell that it was a surety? Depend upon it that your wife is in league with some one against you. I will tell you how you can find out who the thief is. Do you go home and say to your people that, as you have been away a long time, you think it would be well to give an entertainment to the villagers. Then invite the chief people in the village, and when the men are all three-parts tipsy, I will peep into the room and see whether I can not identify the person that came to my house for the money."

To this proposal Denkichi consented. On being asked by his mother-in-law whether he had brought back the money, he said:—"No. Sen was out, and I proposed going again to-morrow morning, as it would not do to be coming home at night with such a large sum of money, but I think that as I have been away so long, to-morrow I should like to give the villagers a feast; so you had better set to and make preparations at once. In the meanwhile I will go around and invite the guests."

The next day some fifty or sixty of the villagers assembled, and after they had been regaling themselves for some time, Sen took a peep at the guests from a small opening in the sliding door. She did not see the man

who had taken the money, and therefore was sure that there must be some one absent.

Denkichi's close scrutiny of the guests revealing the fact that the son of the head of the village was not present, he immediately sent a messenger to his house and begged that he would give them the pleasure of his company.

Shōjirō came; for it was no other than he, and Denkichi treated him with great deference, urging him to conform to the old custom of taking three cups of wine in succession to make up for his late arrival.*

When Shōjirō had settled himself, Denkichi stole out and asked Sen whether she had discovered the thief. "Yes," she replied. "It is the man who has just arrived."

"Why, that is no other than the mayor's son," said Denkichi. "I hope you have not made a mistake. If you have, there will be no end of trouble. Suppose he denies the charge, what am I to say?"

"Then I will make my appearance and produce evidence to prove that he is the culprit," replied Sen, with great complacency.

Denkichi returned to the guests and observed, "I am sorry that you have had such poor fare to-day, I

* Called *kake-tsuke-sambai*.

wish I had something better to give you. I will try and make up for this deficiency, however, by telling you something about my visit to Edo."

Here Denkichi related the whole history of his sojourn in the Shōgun's capital, of the misfortune that he had met with on his way home, and of the manner in which he had subsequently lost his money by the surreptitious removal of the comb from the family altar.

Whereupon the guests became loud in their sympathy with him in his trouble, while his wife and mother-in-law and Hyōji, the head of the village, expressed their doubts as to whether the girl at the hotel had not been playing a trick on them by having two combs made exactly alike.

"In my opinion," said Hyōji, "if the girl were arrested and put under torture, she would confess to having so acted."

Shōjirō chimed in, "This is no doubt the way to set to work. I should have no pity for a woman of this kind. I would go to law about it at once, Denkichi."

"The thief is in the house," said Denkichi. "He is no other than Yatahachi,* who sits next to me." Here he looked fiercely at Shōjirō.

* The name under which Shōjirō tried to hide his identity.

Shōjirō gave a sudden start and the colour rose to his cheeks, but, immediately remembering himself, tried to hide his discomposure by turning and looking in an opposite direction.

Denkichi seeing this, grew furious and said :—"Give back the money. You have taken it!"

Whereupon Shōjirō in his turn began to fire up and asked :—"How dare you accuse the son of the head of the village of crime? What proof have you? Do you think I am going to allow you to call me a thief without any foundation in this way?"

The father here interposed :—"Son, you have been called a thief. If you do not clear yourself of this charge, I will not wait for another to act for me, but this very hand shall strike you down. Wipe off the reproach that has been cast on the name of the head of the village by this accusation, or you die the death."

When the guests were all expecting to witness a fight between Denkichi and Shōjirō, Sen quietly entered the room in which they were assembled. They wondered who this stranger could be, and what connection with the matter in dispute she could possibly have. Haya and her daughter looked at each other in mute astonishment—the interval between the time of their departure from Sen's house and the present not being

long enough to admit of their not knowing who she was."

"Since I am here, Mr. Yatahachi," commenced Sen, "it is useless your disputing further. You are aware that you received from me yesterday the sum of one hundred and fifty *ryō*. This money you will please hand over to its owner. Failing to do so, I have other means to which to resort."

Shōjirō looked up vacantly to the ceiling, feigning a careless air, and then replied:—"What are you talking about? I have never seen you before in my life. This is a device of Denkichi's for making out that I have committed some great offence. You are a wicked woman."

"I have here," replied Sen, "a letter which dropped out of your pocket when you were in our inn, which contains abundant proof that what I say is correct. Mr. Denkichi will please read it to the audience."

Here the letter was handed to Denkichi. It was written by Ume and was addressed to Shōjirō. It read as follows:—"Denkichi has come back from Edo. He made one hundred and fifty *ryō* there, and brought this sum away with him. But having met with robbers on the way home, and being in danger of losing the money, he entrusted it to a woman named Sen, in

service at an inn called the Omiya, Nojiri. A comb was given him as security, and an agreement was made that on the production of the comb by any person whatever the money should be delivered. I now send you this comb, and do you go early in the morning and take the money. On your return you and I will abscond together and spend a happy married life in some distance place."

"Of course you will remember having seen this letter, Mr. Yatahachi," remarked Sen, persistently calling him by the name that he had assumed.

Utterly taken aback, Shōjirō remained quite silent, and looked very much alarmed. Here Hyōji, no longer able to contain himself, seized his son, and commenced to beat him violently; and Haya did the same with her daughter. The guests interposed and begged the parents to have mercy on their children. The greatest confusion ensued. *Sake* bottles were knocked over, wine cups broken, and trays upset hither and thither. At last the parties were separated, and after saying something to one or two persons near him, Hyōji went off to his house and presently came back and addressed Denkichī as follows:—"On leaving your house I despatched four or five men to Shōjirō's room with orders to search for the missing money, with the result that the sum of one hundred and fifty *ryō* has been found secreted there.

Here it is; please count it and see that it is all right."

"It is all here," replied Denkichichi, after carefully counting it.

"As we are relations," said Hyōji, "I beg that you will keep the matter quiet. As for Shōjirō, he shall be banished from my house."

"To this I agree," replied Denkichichi. And then he sat down and scribbled off the formal bill of divorcement* and handed it to Ume. He offered either to support her mother in his own house or to give her money if she preferred to be with her daughter.

Haya replied that after what had happened she could not feel comfortable in Denkichichi's house and that she therefore preferred to be with her daughter.

"Very good, then," replied Denkichichi, "I will give you half of the money I have brought from Edo." Here he counted out seventy five *ryō* and handed it to Haya.

The guests were in no small measure astonished at the prompt way in which Denkichichi acted on this occasion. "He has been trained in the city pervaded by the influence of His Supreme Highness the Enlightened Shōgun."

* The bill of divorcement of my father and a half brother, and my mother and a half brother, was written by Denkichichi. He gave it to Ume, and she gave it to Shōjirō. He gave it to Ume, and she gave it to Shōjirō. He gave it to Ume, and she gave it to Shōjirō.

they remarked, "and this accounts for the noble way in which he acts."

Hyōji, turning to the guests, said:—"That such an incident should have taken place in the house of the head of the village is a reproach to me, and must have the effect of lowering me in your eyes; but since the money has been returned and Mr. Denkichichi has promised to say no more about the matter, I beg that you will not be too hard on me for what has occurred."

To this appeal the following response was made:—"Seeing that Mr. Denkichichi has divorced his wife, is it too much for us to ask that you will deal leniently with Shōjirō? Why not reverse your decision and, instead of banishing him from your house, sanction his marrying Ume. Young people will go astray. It is a mistake to be too severe with them. The best way of settling this affair is to allow the young people to marry."

With no more than an outward show of reluctance, Hyōji gave his consent to the proposal and the marriage was duly solemnized.

And now, though it might seem as if Denkichichi's troubles were over, in reality they were only commencing. He had the misfortune to find himself in a very nest of wicked relations. Hyōji, despite his professions to the contrary, was no better than his son. He knew of

all that had taken place and had consulted with Haya as to the best way to rob Denkichi of his money.






CHAPTER V.

Every village contains a number of people whose delight it is to concern themselves about other people's affairs, not invariably in an interfering spirit, but for the sake of affording themselves the gratification of seeing people settled in life in a way that they deem comfortable and convenient. In the village of Takarada there were several persons of this sort, who, the morning after the feast, came to Denkichì's house and asked to be allowed to conduct Sen to her home. The offer being accepted, the Takarada villagers had an interview with Yosōji, the innkeeper in whose service Sen was, to whom, after relating all that had happened, they spoke as follows:—
“A wife is the chief support of a house. Without this support it is impossible for it to stand. Denkichì, owing to his good luck in Edo, is in a position to retrieve the lost fortunes of his family, provided a suitable wife can be found for him. Who is better fitted for this position than the woman by whose instrumentality he recovered the lost money? Sen's whole connection with Denkichì looks as though it had its origin in a previous world.*

* *Zen-se no innen*—a Buddhist belief to the effect that all events that take place now have their origin in something that occurred in a previous world.



Moreover, Sen is both intelligent and prudent and would in no way bring dishonour on Denkichi's house."

The project met with Yosōji's approval, and, after the circuitous fashion of contracting marriages common in those days,* Yosōji adopted Sen as his daughter and then presented her to Denkichi.

These arrangements only occupied a few hours, and the wedding took place the following day. Hyōji and Haya were invited to be present. The latter excused herself on the score of illness, but Hyōji put in an appearance.

People were congratulating Denkichi on his good fortune when, with a sigh, Hyōji remarked:—"Yes, Denkichi, you are a lucky fellow. I, on the other hand, seem to have had nothing but reverses throughout the whole of my life. My daughter was seized and carried off to some distant place at the age of six. I had one son left. Him I purposed training very carefully; but this was not to be. Another misfortune overtook me: my wife died, and the consequence was that this son, lacking a mother's guidance and care, grew up a self-willed, dishonest fellow, and, as you all know, has lately brought disgrace on me. Had it not been for Mr. Denkichi's leniency with him, there is no knowing into what trouble

* *See* Appendix to Tale VIII.

I might have been brought by this scamp. I suppose it is on account of the kindness which I have shown the peasants over whom I rule that this theft has brought with it no more serious results."

The villagers listened to these remarks with considerable astonishment. The reference to favours bestowed they failed to understand; for none of them were conscious of having received such favours.

When the guests had all left, Sen made known to Yosōji and Denkichichi a fact that had hitherto been concealed from them, namely, that Haya and her daughter were no other than the two individuals who, as related above, had lived at the Moritaya with her father. "Depend upon it," observed Sen, "that this wicked woman has taken a prominent part in all that has taken place. And I am afraid we have not done with her yet."

"'Poisonous flowers are often beautiful', as the proverb has it," remarked Yosōji. "This fellow Hyōji is not to be believed on account of his plausible speeches. One cannot always trust one's relations. To my mind you are not safe here. How would it be if you were to move into my inn for the present?"

Denkichichi did not at once consent to the proposal. He thought that he would remain in the neighbourhood a little time at any rate, just to see how his relations

treated him. He found that they did not intend to have anything to do with him. They kept away from his house altogether. When Sen saw this she suspected that further plotting was going on, and came to the conclusion that it would no longer be safe for them to remain in the neighbourhood.

Denkichi had expended seventy-five *ryō* on the purchase of rice fields which had formerly belonged to his father. This land he entrusted to the care of a friend, and, after selling his house and bidding farewell to the villagers, he and his wife set out for Nojiri.

After Denkichi's departure, Hyōji, having no one in the village whom he feared, lived a most licentious life. Before twelve months had elapsed the money which Haya had received and which had been deemed by Denkichi sufficient to support her was all spent. Moreover, the ground which Denkichi had purchased was by some means or other got hold of by Hyōji and mortgaged. In addition to this, Hyōji sold a hill, well supplied with valuable timber which belonged to the villagers for thirty *ryō* without consulting them about it.

This last step enraged the peasants so much that they lodged a complaint against Hyōji at the Takata Court of Justice, with the result that he was degraded from office

and commanded to pay the money received for the land to the inhabitants of the village.

Subsequent to this the peasants, after conferring together as to the appointment of a new mayor, agreed that his amiable disposition and scrupulous integrity rendered Denkichi eminently fit for the office. Considering that members of his family had filled the post for several generations, they thought it right to ask for his appointment. The authorities agreed and Denkichi was duly installed in office.

Hyōji was overcome with rage and chagrin at this appointment, and determined to concoct something whereby to oust Denkichi from office and bring him into disgrace. Finding that Denkichi's uprightness of character rendered it impossible for him to lay hold of anything whereon to rest an accusation, Hyōji commenced to bribe the local government officials by whom any accusation trumped up by him would be heard.

By degrees he spent all the money that he possessed in this way without any result. So, with a view of obtaining money, he determined to send Shōjirō and his wife to Edo. In order not to excite the curiosity of the neighbours, it was deemed best that they should start after dark. So one evening they set out at dusk and proceeded as far as a place called Sarushima-gawara. They

were about to cross the river there when they remembered that they had forgotten the flint and iron which in those days were used as a substitute for our lucifer matches.

"Do you stop here," said Shōjirō to his wife, "while I go back and fetch the fire-striking materials." Thus saying, Shōjirō set out. In the meanwhile Hyōji had discovered what they had left behind and, anticipating that they would be troubled thereby, had started with the missing articles. The father and son took different roads and did not meet.

As Ume sat on the bank of the river, she espied a man who looked like a palanquin-bearer, crossing the stream with a young woman on his back. As he crossed she heard him say to his captive:—"As I am going to sell you to-night, be sure you address me as elder brother."

"I have a husband coming behind," replied the woman, "he will give you all the money you require, so please allow me to wait for him."

The robber, for such he was, was enraged by this remark, and commenced to beat the woman with a stick. Ume, seeing this, became very frightened and rose to run away, but was instantly discovered by the robber who exclaimed, "You have been listening to what I have been saying, have you. It will never do to let you escape." Ume was soon overtaken, but by shouting

"Murder! Murder!" attracted the attention of Hyōji, who was just at that time approaching the place where Ume had been left by her husband. Finding his daughter-in-law in the hands of a robber, Hyōji attacked the man with his drawn sword. The robber tried to escape, but seeing that he was closely followed by Hyōji, he placed the woman whom he had stolen between himself and his pursuer. It was very dark and Hyōji could only perceive a fleeing object before him. At this he made a slash, the result being that the woman was killed. Seeing this, the robber dealt a heavy blow at Hyōji's legs, which brought him to the ground. Just as the man was pounding his victim with his club, with the intention of making an end of him. Shōjirō arrived and attacked and killed the robber.

The three survivors having congratulated each other on their escape, Hyōji observed :—"Our killing the robber is right enough ; but how shall we account for the death of the woman? We are likely to get into trouble over this affair." Then, after a moment's silence, clapping his hands together, he exclaimed :—"I have hit on it! The plan that we are at present engaged in carrying out was forced on us by Denkichi. Were it not for him there would be no need for you to go to Edo, and so what has occurred to-night would not have taken place. Let Denkichi take the consequences of this journey. Let us

use this incident for the destruction of our foe. We will sever the heads from the bodies and throw the heads into the river, and do you two take off your clothes and put them on the bodies, and then go to Edo and secrete yourselves there. I will accuse Denkichi of murdering you and get him disgraced, and after resuming the office of mayor myself, will by all kinds of devices squeeze a lot of money out of the people and then will escape to Edo, where we will all enjoy ourselves to our hearts' content."

This plot Hyōji proceeded to carry out. He dipped sandals in blood, and going to Denkichi's courtyard, imprinted the stones with blood-stained sandals, and then went at once to the nearest Court of Justice and reported that his son and his son's wife Ume had been cruelly murdered, and that their bodies were lying on the bank of the river at Sarushima-gawara. He added that, in order to prevent detection, their heads had been removed and probably had been thrown into the river, but that there was no difficulty in identifying them by the clothes they wore. Denkichi, Hyōji added, had long borne enmity against Shōjirō for having robbed him of his wife, and the marks of blood in his courtyard, which had been discovered that very morning, served to show that he was the author of the crime which had been perpetrated.

On the night of the above occurrence, Denkichi had gone to a house a little distance from his home and on his way back had stumbled and fallen on one of the bodies that lay in the path at Sarushima-gawara, and had got a little blood on his clothes. This was discovered by Sen's sharp eyes the following morning, and, while they were discussing the subject, she also noticed the blood marks on the courtyard stones and asked her husband what they meant. She washed the stones; but they both felt very uncomfortable, for on the previous night Denkichi had had a very bad dream, which he had related to his wife, much to her consternation.

While they were wondering what all these ill omens portended, constables suddenly entered the house and, exclaiming *Go-jōi**, proceeded to seize and bind Denkichi. He and his wife protested, but they were told that if they had anything to say they would have an opportunity of saying it before the *Bugyō*: the constables could only obey the orders they had received. Thus the hero of my tale was borne off to prison and his wife was left to mourn his fate.

In order to extort a confession from him, Denkichi was tortured day after day in the most horrible manner.

* *Lit.* The "will of the authorities," meaning that the arrest was by warrant.

At first he set his face against belying his conscience, but like many other poor wretches of those times, as he grew physically weaker and weaker, he gave up all hopes of escape and felt that his choice lay between a slow and a swift death. It is not surprising that he should have chosen the latter and represented himself to be guilty of murder.

In the meantime, Sen, forsaken by the villagers, mourned, prayed, and wept in her house till she could weep no longer, and then bethought herself of her old master Yosōji, to whom she applied for help. In accordance with the universal custom of those days, Yosōji set to work to bribe the officers concerned.

But at that time the execution of a man supposed to be guilty of crime was considered a trifle; and, moreover, the trial had been hurried through with an utter disregard for justice, so that Yosōji felt that unless he took some more prompt measures there was little hope of saving Denkichi's life.

Not long before the time of which I write, owing to the abuses in Courts of Justice throughout the country, it had been decided by Tokugawa Yoshimune, the reigning Shōgun, that periodic circuits should be made by competent men to receive the petitions of any one who felt dissatisfied with the decisions of the local courts. When the incident

recorded above was taking place, Sakai Sanuki-no-Kami was on his way to the province of Echigo for the purpose of hearing such appeals.

Yosōji was aware of this fact, but he thought it would never do to await the arrival of this officer in Takata, so, hiring horses, he and Sen set out to meet the judge, and had reached Oiwake when they heard that he was to take his lunch at that place the following day. So they determined to wait for him there.

The next day it was reported by the vanguard of Sanuki-no-Kami that a woman with dishevelled hair, wearing an anxious haggard look, with a written petition stuck on the end of a bamboo extended in front of her, accompanied by an old man of about sixty years of age, was to be seen awaiting the approach of this baron.

On being asked by an officer who she was and what was the nature of her request, Sen replied:—

“If it please Your Honour, we have come to beg your august lord will deign to incline his merciful ears to a petition on behalf of an innocent man who has been falsely accused and condemned to death.”

“The baron has come for the express purpose of hearing such petitions,” replied the officer, in a kind tone of voice. “You may present it to him as he passes.”

In anxious expectation the two stood still while the

long cavalcade marched slowly by until at length they saw glittering in the mid-day sun the magnificent gilding and superb trappings of Sanuki-no-Kami's palanquin slowly nearing the spot where they stood. His advance was heralded by voices proclaiming the object of his visit. With a heart beating fast with agitation, Sen moved towards the palanquin and held out her written petition. It was received by an attendant and handed to the baron as he sat in the palanquin, who, after reading it, gave directions that the woman should visit him in the evening at the inn at which he was to put up in the next village.

On the arrival of the suppliants at the baron's quarters in the evening, they found a large crowd of other petitioners present. But Sen's case being one of life and death, she was the first to be called.

She and Yosōji were examined by one of the baron's officers. They were required to give an account of Denkichi's history from his earliest days and of every circumstance connected with the incident which had led to his arrest. As a result the following letter was despatched to Takata :—

Odaijiku,

Shinano,

Oct. 17th., 1725 A. D.*

* The months of the year are calculated according to the Old Calendar (*kyūreki*).

To Mr. Ina Hyōemon,
Councillor of
Sakakibara Tōtōmi-no-Kami,
Baron of Takata.

Sir,

When putting up at Odajjiku, on my way to the capital,* complaint was made to me by a woman named Sen that her husband Denkichi, the head of the village of Takarada, situated in your dominion, had been falsely accused and condemned to death. It has reached the ears of the august Shōgun that in all provinces a one-sided administration of justice has prevailed, and His Highness has therefore decreed that any person in the country who wishes to appeal from the decision of the local courts is at liberty to do so. In accordance with Sen's request, it has been decided to investigate Denkichi's case. You are therefore to take no further steps whatever in connection with Denkichi, but to despatch him and his accusers, together with all the officials who have had anything to do with the case to Edo. They are to reach Edo before the 30th of this month and to report their arrival at the Court of Ō-oka Tada-

* Kyōto.

suke, Echizen-no-Kami, one of the Chief-Magistrates of the City.

I have the honour to be,

Your obedient servant,

Kakubei.

by command of

kai Sanuki-no-Kami.

This letter was sent by messenger to Takata; which place it reached just in time to save Denkichi's life.

"You are a fortunate fellow, indeed," said the man who made known the news to Denkichi. "You are to go to Edo to be judged."



CHAPTER VI.

The parties concerned reached Edo in good time and appeared at court on the appointed day. Hyōji prepared a petition to Tadasuke Echizen-no-Kami, which was a whole tissue of falsehoods.

Tadasuke read it and remarked somewhat sarcastically:—"Very distressing circumstances, indeed! You two are to be pitied! But still there is no clear evidence that Denkichi killed your son and his wife. How far is it from Sarushima-gawara to Takarada?"

"About thirty *chō*," replied Haya. "What kind of wounds were found on the bodies?" asked the Chief-Magistrate. "The woman was cut from the shoulder right through the body" replied Hyōji. "The man was cut in various places. Where the heads were hidden we could not discover."

"Without seeing the heads, how could you tell that they were those of your children?" asked Tadasuke.

"By their clothes," replied Hyōji.

"Certainly," answered the judge. "Of course parents would know their children by their clothes. You are to be pitied, indeed! You may withdraw for the present. You will be called again later on."

"The case is going on famously," observed Hyōji.
"He evidently believes us."

Denkichi, Yosōji and Sen were now called. Tadasuke eyed the prisoner closely, and perceived that he was extremely reduced by the torture that he had undergone. "Have you any recollection of killing Shōjirō and Ume?" asked the Magistrate

"None whatever," replied Denkichi. "Under torture I confessed to having committed the crime."

"But even under torture," remarked the Magistrate, "it is not for a man to say that he has done a thing when he has not. Then Hyōji, being a relation of yours, must have some reason for what he says."

"Nevertheless, your Honour," answered Denkichi, "I did not kill Shōjirō and Ume. Nor indeed have I shown any signs of enmity to them. That I gave to Haya half of the money that it took five years of hard work to earn is proof that I bore no enmity to them at the time when the murder is said to have been committed. I trust your Honour will take this into consideration."

"Where in Edo did you obtain such a large sum of money?" asked Tadasuke.

Denkichi gave the name of the house where he was employed.

In the course of the inquiry mention was made of the money that he sent to his wife and her mother-in-law during his five years of service. When Tadasuke heard this, he said, "If what you say is correct, it is very plain that you bore no enmity to those who are said to have been killed. But in that case, how can the blood on your garments and on the courtyard stones be explained?"

Denkichi related how his clothes had become stained, but said that he could not account for the marks of blood on the stones.

Tadasuke now inquired how the marriage between Denkichi and Sen had been effected; and when Denkichi had given the whole history of the events that led to their union, Tadasuke said, "There is a great deal of truth in what you say. You may withdraw for the present."

Tadasuke perceived that the case was a serious one. It was evidently one of those heinous miscarriages of public justice which were reported to be so prevalent in the provinces at the time. He determined therefore that he would make the trial as public as possible. Consequently he had it carried into the Supreme Court. The result was that the court was attended by all the chief officers of state. Among those present there were Ōkubo Kaga-no-Kami, State Councillor; Matsudaira Noto-no-Kami and Mizuno Iki-no-Kami, sub-councillors; Koide

Shinano-no-Kami and Kuroda Buzen-no-Kami, Superintendents of shrines; Maeda Suō-no-Kami, the chief Public Procurator, and Hisamatsu Zenkurō, Assistant Public Procurator; Suwa-Mino-no-Kami, the other Chief-Magistrate of the city, and Komagine Kai-no-Kami and Kake Harima-no-Kami, public auditors. Besides these all the chief minor officials of the city were summoned. Occupying a most conspicuous position, surrounded on the right and left by public prosecutors and other officials, sat the famous magistrate who has been called the Japanese Solomon. The first witness summoned was Itō Hanemon, *Bugyō* of Takata and retainer of Sakakibara.

"It is reported that Denkichi has been condemned to death by you. Is this the case?" asked Tadasuke.

"It is, your Honour," replied Hanemon. "After inquiring well into the matter, his guilt being clear, I condemned him to death. And Sen, who has caused his case to be brought before your Honour, is an audaciously impudent woman."

"You are a Minister of Justice. Your position under His Excellency Sakakibara resembles the one I hold under His Supreme Highness the Shōgun. You ought to know the value of human life. As is taught us by the sage,* 'Where it is doubtful whether persons are

* This passage is from the *Shokyō*.

guilty or not, give them the benefit of the doubt by not taking any steps to punish them; and where it is doubtful whether there is merit or not, always reward.' If you err, it is better to err on the side of leniency. While this is so, it is asserted that, guided only by the fact of Denkichi's clothes being stained with blood and of there being marks of blood found on the stones of his courtyard, you subjected him to torture and forced out of him a confession of his guilt. Can you deny this?"

"Denkichi was not able to hide his guilt," replied Hanemon. "He confessed it and placed his seal on the confession."

"This is not what I want to know," interposed Tadasuke, not waiting for Hanemon to finish his sentence. "What I want to know is, on what evidence did you rely when you condemned him to death? You say blood was found on the skirts of his garments; but if this blood had come from the persons whom he had killed, it would have been visible on the upper part of his clothes and not on the skirts of his nether garments. Then you say there were marks of blood-stained sandals on the stones of his courtyard; but do you suppose that a man could walk thirty *chō* with sandals and the blood remain on them in such quantity as to make a mark on a stone? If he flew through the air it might be done, but if he went on foot,

never. The footprints were doubtless placed on the stones by Hyōji. Did you inquire what time Denkichi left his house that night?"

"No."

"Did you examine Denkichi's weapons to see whether marks of blood were on any of them?"

"No."

"Then without making any attempt whatever to test the truth of Hyōji's story, you subjected Denkichi to torture—a pretty way of administering justice, I must say. Your offence, sir, is too grave to be overlooked. The part you have played in this case will be investigated later on."

Hanemon, pale with fright, retired without attempting to reply.

Ihyōji was next called.

"As you have heard," said Tadasuke, "the evidence of Denkichi's guilt hitherto produced is insufficient. Have you any further evidence?"

Ihyōji here repeated what has already been stated. He accused Denkichi of having borne lasting enmity to him and to his house. His statements were all denied by Denkichi. Sen was required to relate what had led to Ume's divorce and to recount the circumstances connected

with the theft of the money, as well as the conduct of Haya when in her father's house.

"It seems then," said the judge to Hyōji at the conclusion of this part of the trial, "that your assertions are pure inventions. You are an unscrupulous scoundrel."

Here Haya interposed: "Please, your Honour, my husband is right and Denkichi and his wife are wicked people."

"Hold your tongue," exclaimed the judge. "It is enough for you to speak when you are spoken to. There is one question, however, you will please answer me. Who acted as your middleman when you became Hyōji's wife?"

"Please, your Honour, I had no middleman.* My daughter married Hyōji's son and I thought it would be a convenient arrangement for me to marry Hyōji, and so we married without consulting anybody."

It is recorded that as they listened to this remark a smile stole over the faces of the great officers of state, and that it was all that Tadasuke, who enjoyed a joke more than most men, could do to maintain his gravity.

Denkichi was now required to relate the manner in

* Marriage contracts without resort to a middleman were in those days considered most improper and are still so regarded by old-fashioned people.

which he came into contact with Haya. After hearing all, Tadasuke said to Haya, "You evidently are an unscrupulous wretch. You will at once be sent to prison."

He was bound and carried off to gaol.

Then turning to Hyōji, Tadasuke asked :—"How did it happen that you were ejected from the office of mayor of the village?"

Hyōji gave the real reason, but added that Denkichi had obtained the office through bribery, the falsehood of which assertions was abundantly shown by Denkichi and his friends.

Day after day the trial continued. Every one at all connected with the case was called ; among them Miuraya Shirozaemon, Denkichi's master during his stay in Edo.

He testified to Denkichi's honesty and diligence. It was evident enough to the judge that Denkichi was innocent, but the mystery that he wished to clear up was who had killed the persons found dead at Sarushima-gawara. To this no clue was obtained till Yosōji, one day, stated that it was reported that a woman's head had been discovered about nine miles from Sarushima-gawara and that a man called Toi Genjirō, a retainer of Lord Hosokawa, had declared that it was the head of his wife, and had buried it with great lamentation in a neighbouring cemetery.

Genjirō was called and it was found that the report that he was the husband of the woman who had been killed was true. He had seen the head but not the body of his wife. The deceased woman's name was Kamidai Chiyo. When only about five years old she had been stolen. After marrying Genjirō she had often said that she should like to find out who her father was. She knew that she had come from the neighbourhood of Takata. So when Genjirō obtained leave from his lord to go to some hot springs in Shinano, he and his wife thought it would be a good opportunity for making inquiries as to her parents. With this object in view, on their way home, they determined to visit Takata. After they entered the province of Echigo, it commenced to rain hard, and while Genjirō was purchasing a rain-coat, Chiyo was left in the road. It was during this short interval that she was carried off by the robber.

After these circumstances had all been stated to Tadasuke, turning to Hyōji, he said :—" It is evident then, that you and Shōjiro killed the robber and Chiyo Genjirō's wife, that you cut their heads off to prevent detection, and used their bodies as a means of accusing Denkichi." Then, turning to Genjirō, he said :—" Here, Genjirō, is the man that killed your wife." Then to Hyōji :—" Seeing that things have thus been brought to light, you had better tell me the whole truth at once."

"I have nothing to reveal," replied Hyōji. To Hanemon, the Takata *Bugyō*, the Magistrate said:—"You perceive that the bodies found at Sarushima-gawara were those of Genjirō's wife and a highway robber. Your investigation of the matter was, then, outrageously careless. Have you anything to say in your defence?"

Hanemon made no answer.

Tadasuke, who in the administration of justice never overlooked the fact on which so much stress is laid by Chinese sages, that the persons who appoint unworthy officers are more or less responsible for the consequences of such appointments, for the flagrant neglect of duty and gross injustice that may ensue, now, turning to Hanemon's superior officer, said:—"What has happened may be said to be the fault of the baron of Takata, Sakakibara, for had he appointed as his immediate subordinate a worthy man, such an official would have selected a virtuous man to act under him, and so down to the lowest office-bearer corruption would have been unknown. Under these conditions the existence of such a *Bugyō* as Hanemon would have been an impossibility. For the outrage which has been perpetrated your master is in a measure responsible. Of this you will please inform him."

Then, turning to Yosōji, Tadasuke said:—"You stated just now that you had made use of bribes in getting

Denkichi acquitted. How much did you spend on this object?"

"To Hanemon I gave ten *ryō*, and to his subordinates two *ryō* each. The sum expended altogether amounted to twenty *ryō*."

"Then it is true that you received a bribe, Hanemon?"

"I understood it to be a present connected with a visit of ceremony,"* replied Hanemon.

"If it had been only this," rejoined Tadasuke, "a fish or a fowl would have been more in accordance with custom. Ten *ryō* complimentary gifts have never been heard of. You have been guilty of corrupting public justice by accepting bribes. You are to be confined in the *Agariya*.† Your subordinate officers having also been bribed, they will be placed under guard."

Denkichi was now taken out of prison and lodged in a private house, and all his bonds, with the exception of his handcuffs, were removed.

In the course of the examination which followed, Denkichi said:—"It was stated by Genjirō the other day

* It was customary for such visits to be paid in the very hot and the very cold weather, when inquiry after the health of a friend was accompanied by a small present. It is to this now much discontinued custom that Hanemon refers.

† A prison for better class prisoners.

that his wife's name was Kamidai Chiyo, and that she was stolen at the age of five. Now Hyōji had a daughter bearing this name, and she too was lost when about five years of age, I have no doubt that the woman he killed was this daughter."

"True, true!" exclaimed Tadasuke, clapping his hands together. "The punishment of accumulated guilt is something fearful. Horrible to think of! Hyōji killed his own child and it was her head that he threw into the river!"

Tadasuke was now certain that Shōjirō and Ume were still alive, and he was of opinion that the trial could not be brought to a satisfactory conclusion without their presence. To find them, however, was no easy matter. They were poor people and might be quietly settled in any part of the country; and who was to know where they were?

My story now returns to these two missing links in the chain of evidence. In Chapter IV it was stated that they had set out for Edo, which city they reached in safety, and took up their quarters in a back street of the third ward of Hongō-machi, Hongō. They changed their names: Shōjirō becoming Shōbei, and Ume Toyo. They made a living by day-labour. Toyo did washing, and Shōbei hired himself out to a doctor called Katsurayama Dōtaku, whose medicine box he carried and of whose

sandals and clogs he took charge. It was not long before the adventurers found out that it was not every poor man that could make money as fast as Denkichi had done, so that Shōbei soon began to think that if his father's desire to have an easy time on account of his son's opulence was ever to be gratified, he must get money in some more rapid way than he was doing. Hence, watching his chance, he succeeded one night in appropriating about thirty *ryō* of the doctor's money.

He was found out, arrested, brought before Tadasuke, and his identity discovered. His wife Ume, who it is said, was somewhat demented at the time, having disclosed the whole plot, Shōjirō thought that it was no use trying to conceal anything more. So he placed his seal on a written confession of the various details of the plot.

Tadasuke now summoned Hyōji, from whom the arrest of his son had been carefully concealed, and asked him whether he would not confess the part he had taken in Denkichi's accusation.

He still persisted in refusing, saying :—"You take Denkichi's part and believe everything he says ; and you wont listen to what I say in reply."

"I am guided by reason in what I do," replied Tadasuke ; "as you will yet see. If you refuse to confess your crime, I have other means of disclosing it."

Here Shōjirō and Ume were brought bound into the court. As they entered, Tadasuke exclaimed:—

“Look! look! your dear children have come to life!”

Hyōji, like many a clever criminal, instantly thought to himself;—“I need only say that I have made a mistake. He can't prove that anything which has happened was designed.” So he simply remarked:—“I am sorry to have given your Excellency so much trouble. I thought my son and his wife were dead. My joy knows no bounds now that I discover that they are still alive. Please forgive the trouble that I have caused.”

“A hardened sinner, indeed!” said Tadasuke to himself as he heard these words. “So you still think to hide your crime, do you. Now listen to the reading of your son Shōjirō's confession.”

“Tadasuke ordered that part of the confession to be read which contained the following:—“Taking advantage of the darkness, my father and I killed two persons, and immediately concocted a plan for imputing the guilt to Denkichi. The heads of the two deceased persons we cut off and threw into the river, and having clothed the bodies with our own garments, we continued our journey. Being afraid that if we went to Edo by the Nakasendō, we might meet some one who knew us, we crossed to the Koshukaidō and travelled to Edo by it. Having com-

mitted another offence in Edo, I was arrested and so my former crime was brought to light."

"How now Hyōji?" exclaimed the judge. "Will you still hold out? If you still refuse to confess your crime, you will be tortured."

Hyōji hung his head and stood speechless; whereupon Tadasuke informed him that as a punishment for his many sins he had been allowed to make the great mistake of killing his own daughter, and that by this act he had rendered himself the everlasting enemy of Genjirō, the deceased woman's husband.

Softened by this revelation, Hyōji confessed the whole of his guilt and the confession was written out and sealed in the customary manner.

Judgment was delivered on February 3 (O.C.). A.D. 1726, which was as follows:—

"Hyōji, peasant of the village of Takarada, Kubiki District, Echigo, under the dominion of Sakakibara Tōtōmi, you having been expelled from the office of head of the village of Takarada owing to dishonest conduct, full of regret and envy at the appointment of Denkichi as your successor, in conjunction with Haya, sought an opportunity of ousting him from his office. Having killed your own daughter at Sarushima-gawara, you determined to attribute the crime to Denkichi, and by conference with

the head of the district, Itō Hanemon, and his subordinate officers, succeeded in procuring the condemnation of an innocent man. For these crimes you are sentenced to be beheaded and to have your head exposed at Sarushima-gawara.*

(2) Haya, your life has been throughout a bad one. Forgetful of the kindness shown you by Moritaya Gengorō, you left his house surreptitiously. In addition to this you showed no gratitude for the handsome present of seventy-five *ryō* received from Denkichī, but combined with Hyōji to compass his death. You are banished to the island of Hachijō.

(3) Shōjirō (now called Shōbei), son of Hyōji, for thieving the sum of one hundred and fifty *ryō*, for adultery committed with Ume during her husband's absence;

* It is singular that nothing is said about Hyōji's having killed his daughter unintentionally. This fact does not seem to have been known to Tadasuke. Perhaps Hyōji saw no object in disclosing it, as his condemnation to death was certain even had the deceased girl borne no relationship to him, unless he were able to prove that her death was the result of accident, as was the case, the robber having used the girl's body as a shield. From the lips of a man who had told so many lies and whose whole character was so reprobate, no testimony on this subject would have secured credence in Tadasuke's court. This omission is the one weak point in the case as summed up by the Magistrate. Going strictly by the evidence, Hyōji's crime was not murder, as he lacked the intention to kill. He was beheaded for having falsely accused another man of murder and for general misconduct.

for murder committed at Sarushima-gawara ; for the part you took in plotting Denkichi's death and for thieving the sum of thirty *ryō* in Edo, you are condemned to be beheaded and your head to be exposed at Sarushima-gawara.

(4) Ume (now called Toyo), wife of Shōjirō (now called Shōbei), for adultery committed during Denkichi's absence ; for instigating Shōjirō to thief Denkichi's money, you are banished to the island of Miyake.

(5) "Itō Hanemon, head of the district of Kubiki. You, while holding an important office under Government, received bribes, and by means of torture, condemned an innocent man to death. You will be sent bound to Sakakibara Tōtōmi, to be dealt with according to the law of his daimiate."*

(6) "Kawasaki Kinemon and Onodera Gembei, though as the subordinates of Hanemon your action was not altogether free, yet in receiving bribes you abused your power as Government officials and helped to bring about the condemnation of an innocent man. You will for this offence be sent bound to the Baron of Takata to be dealt with according to the law of his daimiate."†

* Hanemon was subsequently beheaded.

† These two were degraded from the rank of *samurai* and expelled from Sakakibara's dominion.

(7) Denkichi, head of the village of Takarada, Kubiki, Echigo. You are not merely declared guiltless, but your conduct on all occasions is deemed worthy of the highest praise. The cardinal virtues have all in turn been observed by you. Benevolence and integrity were shown in your bestowal on your aunt the large sum of money that you had laid by for the purpose of recovering property which had belonged to your ancestors. Discretion was displayed in your cutting yourself off from intercourse with such a wicked man as Hyōji. Generosity of a rare kind was manifested in your acting in strict accordance with the statement made in the bill of divorce that you gave Ume, in allowing her to marry whomsoever she pleased without bearing any enmity against her or Shōjirō. Propriety and respect for lawful authority were shown in your refusing to bear any enmity in your heart against the officials who were unjustly punishing you. Courage, in your determining to die when you thought escape impossible. I shall recommend the Baron of Takata to bestow on you such a reward as he may deem fit. I shall give directions to his officers to this intent.

(8) Sen, you are a woman of extraordinary chastity and uprightness, of excellence rarely found among illiterate people. Your virtue has been witnessed by Heaven and to reward it your husband's innocence has been

brought to light. Your conduct merits higher praise than words can express."

(9) "Yosōji, of the Nojiri Inn, Mizuuchi, Shinano, you, having adopted Sen as your child, spared no money to save her husband's life and render him assistance in various ways, your conduct is declared to be most praiseworthy."

Denkichi was, on his return to Takarada, reinstalled in office as head of the village and permitted to wear two swords.* Forgiving and generous to the end of his days, he paid priests to pray for the souls of those who had thrown away ~~their~~ lives in persecuting him. He lived to recover all the family estates, was held in high regard by the villagers and received from the baron of Takata from time to time valuable presents. Thus did virtue triumph over vice and persecuted innocence find champions to vindicate its cause and confer on it the honour that it merits.

"Virtue alone outbuilds the Pyramids;

"Her monuments shall last when Egypt's fall."

* The rank he received was that of a *gōshi* or country *samurai*.



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APPENDIX TO TALE IX

[The following article on "Marriage in Japan in Ancient Times" was written by me for the "Japan Weekly Mail" in 1891. It appeared in that journal on Dec. 26th that year. The information it contains seems to me to be of considerable value.]

IT is pleasant to observe that there is among a small section of the learned class in Japan a growing taste for antiquarian research of all kinds. The Historical Society is doing good service in publishing the results of investigations on a variety of subjects. Mr. Sekine Masanao has collected and classified a number of interesting facts on the marriage laws of ancient Japan, which are not generally known and which throw considerable light on modern marriage customs. Mr. Sekine has studied the subject in a very thorough manner; as may be seen by the list of works consulted. Marriage laws among civilised nations are undergoing considerable modification, and there are evidences in some quarters that the day is not far distant when still more sweeping reforms will be insisted on by the advance of public opinion. Under these circumstances a history of the laws and usages of ancient Japan is of no little interest; not of course as an indication of a state to which it would be desirable to revert, but as an index of the forms which laws and customs

for the most part unaffected by religion are apt to assume. Whatever else was influenced by Buddhism, it is certain that the marriage laws of this country were not altered in any important respect by its teaching. Hence from the point of view of the sociologist the relation of the sexes in ancient Japan is a subject of no little interest. Though Japan in her political organisation followed in the wake of China, in her social customs to a very large extent she asserted her independence.

In furnishing our readers with an abstract of Mr. Sekine's essay we shall aim at giving the conclusions to which the author's studies have led him, without in each case supplying every link in the chain of proof. Those who wish to investigate the subject further should consult the authorities quoted by Mr. Sekine. The indirect proofs of existing customs drawn by Mr. Sekine from verses of poetry or based on casual allusions found in standard works, show how critically he has studied the subject and how well he understands that in investigations of this kind a higher value is to be attached to undesigned testimony than to evidence furnished for a purpose.

Mr. Sekine treats the history of marriage as practised in Japan during the following five periods:—I. From the dawn of history to the Taikwa era (A.D. 695). II. From the Taikwa era to the Enreki era (A.D. 782). III. From

the Enreki era to the Yowa era (A.D. 1181). IV. From the establishment of the Yoritomo Shōgunate to the fall of the Ashikaga dynasty (A.D. 1184—1574). V. From the establishment of the Tokugawa Shōgunate (A.D. 1600) to the present time.

I.—*From the dawn of History to the Taikwa Era* (A.D. 695.)—Mr. Sekine maintains that there is clear proof that polygamy was the first form of marriage practised in Japan. There was in the very earliest times, however, a distinction in the rank held by the different wives, priority being granted according to the time of marriage. But at a subsequent date wives were all placed on an equality. There is evidence to show that in those days unfaithfulness to their husbands was a vice of which women were rarely guilty. The highly virtuous character of the Japanese women of the era furnished subject for comment in Chinese books. In a book called the 後漢書, *Gokanjo*, the following reference to the chastity of Japanese women occurs:—"In Japan it is customary for a man of high rank to have four or five wives and for less important personages to possess two or three. But the women do not regard each other with any jealousy and are faithful to their husbands."

An interesting glimpse is afforded us of how courtship commenced in those early days. In towns and in the country alike social entertainments called *Uta-kagai*

(i.e. *uta-kakeai*) were held, at which young men and women met and conversed freely and vied with each other in verse-making. On these occasions it was customary for young men to pay attentions to girls which not infrequently ended in proposals of marriage. When this was the case and the girl was satisfied with her suitor, she would consult her parents or such other relation as had control of her. On the consent of the relations to the match, the wedding day was fixed. On that day the bridegroom went to the bride's house to be married. After the ceremony in some few cases the newly married couple settled in a house by themselves, but in the majority of instances the wife lived with her own relations and her husband paid her visits whenever he pleased. It was this practice doubtless that prevented jealousy among the wives. In many instances the wives did not even know each other. To speak of their freedom from jealousy as a virtue, reminds one of the old woman who said she was on excellent terms with her neighbours and afterwards disclosed the fact that the nearest house to hers was five miles distant. During the period under consideration there seem to have been more women than men in Japan. This in a measure accounts for the polygamy which existed at that time.

The sources of information consulted by Mr. Sekine

for this period are the *Kojiki*, *Nihonki*, *Harima Fūdoki*, 風土記, *Settsu Fūdoki*, *Izumo Fūdoki*, *Manyōshū*, *Wamyōshō*, 和名抄, *Kojikiden*, and the *Nanrei-ikō* 南嶺遺稿.

II.—*From the Taikwa Era to the Enreki Era* (A.D. 781). The introduction of Chinese literature took place during this period and the general result was an unsettled state of mind in reference to a variety of native customs. It seems that class distinctions were much more marked in that age than they have been since. For in A.D. 645 the following law having reference to progeny was passed:—"Children born of parents who are both of the highest rank belong to the father. Children born of parents whose rank is unequal belong to the parent who is of the lower rank, whether father or mother. Children born of lower class parents belong to the mother." The offspring of persons employed in temples were all treated as of high rank.

During the period under consideration the relation of the sexes underwent great change. Morals became lax. Divorce and remarriage were common. Wives frequented temples for the purpose of praying for the death of their rivals. The term concubine was for the first time applied to women kept as mistresses of married men. In the days of the Emperor Mommu (A.D. 697-707), abuses were so numerous that it was considered necessary

to pass certain new marriage laws. These are contained in a work known as the *Taihōryō*, or the Law of the Taihō period (701-703). It is interesting to observe, *en passant*, that many of the laws which this code contains have remained in force down to the present day. To the following articles of the code Mr. Sekine draws special attention :—

(1.) The age at which marriage shall be allowed is fixed at 15 in the case of boys and 13 in that of girls.

(2.) Marriage shall only take place when permitted by those in authority in the families of the persons to be married.

(3.) Negotiation between the contracting parties shall be conducted by the *Nakōdo*, or Middleman.

(4.) The husband may divorce his wife for any of the following seven reasons :—

(a.) When she is childless.

(b.) When she is guilty of adultery.

(c.) When she is guilty of disobedience to her parents-in-law.

(d.) When she talks too much.

(e.) When she is guilty of theft.

(f.) When she is addicted to jealousy.

(g.) When she suffers from a hereditary disease.

Although under ordinary circumstances a husband might divorce his wife for any of the above reasons, in certain special instances this right was taken from him, except in the cases *b* and *g*, when it always held good. These instance were :

(*a*.) When the wife had behaved in an exemplary manner during an illness of her father-in-law or mother-in-law, and observed the proper funeral rites after the death of either or both.

(*b*.) When the wife, though of low station at the time of her marriage, had subsequently risen in rank.

(*c*.) When the wife had no relation to whom, or no place to which, she might be sent.

Of course if the wife consented she might be sent away notwithstanding these objections.

The woman might also obtain, at any time before the actual marriage ceremony, annulment of the agreement to marry any man, for the following reasons :—

(*a*.) When there had been a delay in performing the marriage ceremony of three months without sufficient cause.

(*b*.) When the proposed husband had been absent at any one time for a whole month in Japan or for a whole a year in a foreign country.

(*c*.) When he had been convicted of a crime.

(d). When the husband had gone abroad and had not returned within the following periods, viz., five years if they had children, and three years if not.

(e.) When the husband had deserted his wife, and had not returned during the following periods, viz., three years if there were children, and two years if there were none.

The cases in which husband and wife *must* separate were :—

(a.) When the husband had been guilty of violence towards his wife's parents or relations.

(b.) When the wife had been guilty of violence towards, or slander of, her husband's parents or relations, or had tried to injure her husband.

(4.) If marriage took place or if a married woman was divorced unknown to those in authority in the house concerned, the latter had power to annul the acts of the offending parties within three months of their commission.

The course to be taken in the case of a divorce was to inform the relative who possessed authority over the wife. If no such person existed, then the husband was allowed to do as he pleased. The divorce was legalized by a document written by the husband in which the reasons for the measure were stated. If the

husband could not write, he was required to put ink on the three joints of his first finger and stamp the bill of divorce therewith, which rendered it valid.

When for any of the above reasons a wife left her husband, she was allowed to take her personal effects and her servants with her.

Mr. Sekine observes *en passant* that it was customary for slaves to be sold at this time.

The personal effects of the wife belonged to the husband and after her death he was under no obligation to return them to her relations.

During this period marriages were forbidden between persons of low and high rank. Society was then divided up into *ryōmin* (superior persons) and *seminin* (inferior persons). In the latter category were included those who guarded the Royal mausoleum, the children of rebels, who were slaves of the Government, and those who had been servants from generation to generation. Farmers, peasants, merchants and traders were all included in the superior class. It was feudalism that subsequently caused persons following these occupations to be regarded as inferior to warriors.

There were certain penalties for transgression of the above rules. Some of the books which contained accounts of these have, Mr. Sekine informs us, been destroyed,

but the following clauses which are worth noting have been culled from extant works:

(1.)—For marriage without consent of the family authorities, fifty stripes with a whip.

(2.)—In the case of marriages which followed fornication, the guilty parties were not to be pardoned even when there was a general amnesty.*

(3.)—If a man divorced his wife without her having been guilty of any of the faults mentioned in the above category (*vide* No. 4), he was imprisoned for one month, with hard labour. If the wife had been guilty of an offence which had been atoned for in any of the three ways specified above, and notwithstanding this her husband divorced her, he received eighty stripes with the rod.

(4.)—If women who had promised to marry and who had received presents in token thereof broke their promise, they received fifty lashes with the whip.

(5.)—For treating a wife like a concubine or for using a maid-servant as a wife, imprisonment with hard labour for one year was the penalty, and the persons thus misplaced were restored to their former positions.

(6.)—In the case of a servant with whom a man had cohabited resulting in the birth of a child, should the

* A year's imprisonment was the punishment for fornication at that time.

social position of her relations warrant it, she might be made a concubine.

(7.)—If an official cohabited with a woman who was placed under his charge, he received eighty stripes with a rod.

(8.)—Illicit intercourse with another man's wife was punished with a year's imprisonment of both the man and the woman, with hard labour, and subsequent separation.

(9.)—If a man neglected to divorce a wife who had committed acts of violence against her husband's relations, he received 100 stripes with the rod.

(10.)—A man who was guilty of bigamy was imprisoned for one year. And the second woman he had married received 100 stripes with the rod.

The works consulted by Mr. Sekine for this period are the *Nihonki*, *Ryō no Gigi*, 令義解, *Ryōshūkai*, 令集解, *Ryōshō*, 令抄. *Hōsōshiyōshō*, 法曹至要抄, *Manyōshū*, *Zoku Nihonki* and the *Nihon Kiryaku*.

III.—*From the Enreki Era to the Yōwa Era* (A. D. 1182).—From the commencement of this era, the laws in force during the last period fell into disuse and all kinds of abuses arose. Polygamy prevailed among all classes. The Emperor Ichijō (987-1011) had two queens and the Emperor Go-reizei (1047-1068) [Reizei II.] three. Not knowing what to call one of his wives, she was named

(Okkasan). Fujiwara no Morisuke had three wives; Fujiwara no Michinaga two.

One cause for the revival of polygamy was the high regard in which pure genealogical descent was held.

The mode of contracting a marriage during this period reverted to the ancient custom. The man went to the woman's house and became an adopted son of her parents.

The *Uta-kagai*, or social assembly of verse-makers, was abolished. Mr. Sekine thinks that what is called the *Bon-odori*, which is practised now in Echigo and elsewhere, is a remnant of this custom.

During the era under consideration intercourse between men and women was subject to numerous restrictions. If a man had business with a woman, unless he knew her well, he might not enter her abode. Even in the case of men and women who were well known to each other, screens were often placed between them while business was being transacted. Boys and girls with different mothers, though living in the same house, were ashamed to see each other. It was usual in those days for persons marrying to do so without seeing each other's faces beforehand. They began their intercourse by hearsay. Letters were interchanged, but even these were frequently written by friends of the persons negotiating for

marriage. In this age the custom of the husbands' going around to the wives' houses again prevailed. There was no law of divorce. If a man did not visit a wife within a reasonable time, she was married to another husband. This state of things gave rise to no disputes. If a man separated from his wife, it caused no disturbance among her relations. Married persons often left each other by mutual consent, or if one wished to discontinue the connection, the other did not feel called upon to object.

There were cases of jealousy, however, among wives who resided in the same house with their husbands. It is mentioned in the *Gempei Seisuiiki* that Fujiwara no Kaneie, that is, Taira no Sadamori, had three wives who on one occasion for three whole days tore each other's hair and scratched each other's faces, *and that the husband fled from the house in despair.*

Sources of information for the above period: the *Taketori Monogatari*, *Ise Monogatari*, *Genji Monogatari*, *Ochikubo Monogatari*, *Eiga Monogatari*, *Kōke Shidai* 江家次第, and the *Okagami Hōmotsushū* (寶物集).

IV.—*From the establishment of the Yoritomo Shōgunate to the fall of the Ashikaga Shōgunate* (A.D. 1184-1584).—The commencement of the age of feudalism witnessed numerous changes in respect of marriage. Hōjō

Yasutoki, shortly after the death of Yoritomo, published a book called *Tei-ei Shikimoku*.* This book had reference to the *samurai* class specially; but the regulations it contains were applied to other classes. The references to marriage in this work are almost exclusively confined to the property of the married couple. Bearing on this subject the following information is furnished by Mr. Sekine:—

(1.) In the case of a man who had committed a grave offence, his wife's property, as well as his own, was confiscated.

(2.) The parents of a wife had the power to take property which had been made over to her husband if they thought fit.

The particulars given below have been taken from various contemporary works:—

(1.) In the case of a court-noble becoming the adopted son of an ordinary subject, the bequeathing of property to the wife of such a nobleman was forbidden.

(2.) If the woman was divorced on account of a serious offence, she was not entitled to hold any property which her husband might have made over to her previously.

* The Ideographs are given below.

(3.) If a man divorced his wife without cause, he could not recover any property he might have given to her unless she married again. In the latter case she was obliged to return the property to her former husband.

(4.) A divorced wife inheriting property might not come into possession of it until after the death of her former husband, even though she did not marry again. The motive of this restriction was that she should not neglect her obligation to pray for the spirit of her former husband after his decease. The above regulation led to the practice of women who had inherited property from former husbands feigning sickness, bequeathing the property to their relations, or retiring into private life; after which they quietly took the property again. This was the cause of stricter laws being passed, which in turn, however, called forth new methods of evasion.

(5.) A landowner guilty of adultery with another man's wife was subject to the confiscation of half of his land and was not allowed to hold office any more. In the case of *samurai* who had no land, they were banished. The women who participated were also banished.

Heads of villages guilty of adultery were fined 10 *kwammon* (=1 *ryō*) and peasants 5 *kwammon*. The same penalty was enforced in the case of the women concerned.

(6.) An official who committed fornication *en voyage*

APPENDIX.

is not allowed to attend office for 100 days. In the case of the servants of the above found guilty of fornication, they had half of their queues shaved off. Priests guilty of this crime were punished in another way.

Under the Ashikaga rule an important change took place in the mode of conducting the ceremony of marriage. The bride went to the bridegroom's house, except in cases where the bridegroom was adopted as a son of the family to which the bride belonged. The customs in vogue among the common people during this period are not recorded. But the following particulars bearing on marriage among the well-to-do classes are of interest :—

On the day of her wedding, accompanied by numbers of women, all riding in *kago*, and with certain articles of furniture such as screens, chests of drawers, boxes, etc., borne after her, the bride set out for the bridegroom's house. The bride's *kago* was third in the procession. She was preceded by two of her chief attendants. On her departure from her own house, a fire was lit on the right side of the gate through which she passed. Her arrival at the bridegroom's house was the signal for a fire to be lit on the right side of his entrance gate. The bride was met on the road by messengers from the bridegroom, to whose care she was

formally entrusted. On her arrival at the house, the ceremony of marriage was performed by two old women. It consisted for the most part of drinking in a prescribed manner cups of *sake*. The bridal party wore white garments for three days, after which the bride was introduced to her father-in-law and mother-in-law and the various members of the family.

Among the middle and lower classes during this period there was a somewhat peculiar custom called *mizu-kake iwai* (water-throwing festival). This took place on the 1st of January in the year after the marriage. On that day the friends of the bridegroom assembled at his house, and after presenting fish and partaking of refreshments, they commenced to use the gilded buckets and dippers which they had brought with them for throwing water on each other. This custom is very ancient, having been practised in the days of the Emperor Shirakawa (A.D. 1073-1086). At a later period it frequently ended in a serious fight between the parties concerned. The term used to describe this festival gave rise to an epithet now in constant use. A dispute the rights and wrongs of which it is impossible to determine is called a *mizu-kake ron*. The custom was forbidden in the Tokugawa era. All that remained of it was the sending of the utensils previously used by the bridegroom,

in return for which he asked his friends to a feast, which was called a *mizu kake-furumai*.

There was another curious custom prevailing in this period which deserves notice. It was called the *uwanari-uchi*, or the *sōdō-uchi*, the "beating of the second wife," or the "noisy beating." Where a man had divorced his wife and married again, it was customary for the first wife, within about 40 days after the marriage, to send a challenge to the new wife—in which she said that she had a real cause for quarrelling and that on a certain day she should pay her rival a visit. The divorced wife specified the weapons which would be used on the occasion; which usually consisted of wooden swords (*ki-dachi*) or sticks. At a later age *kinai* (or split bamboo swords) were substituted for these. The aggrieved wife assembled a number of female friends, which occasionally numbered a hundred. The challenge was received in various ways by the newly married women. Some expressed surprise, some asked the forgiveness of the wronged woman, and others, of more pluck, said, "You will find me quite prepared to receive you."

On the appointed day the divorced wife started for the house of her foe, riding in a *kago*, followed by her attendants, who all walked. The women wore what are called *fukuri-bakama* and allowed their hair to hang in a

dishevelled state on their shoulders. Some of them wore helmets, others tied their heads with cloths. On arrival at the house, they entered by the back door and commenced to smash anything that met their eyes. The women assembled in the house did their best to appease the injured wife and to induce her to leave the house without doing much damage. But they were not often successful, and tough battles were frequently fought. The husband took no notice of the whole affair. There were in those days women who prided themselves on going to such affrays. One old woman referred to in the *Mukashi Mukashi Monogatari* asserts that she had taken part in no less than sixteen of them. This custom was the product of the warlike influences of the Ashikaga period, when it was not uncommon for women to go out to battle.

During this age the power of each baron was so great and so little regard was paid to the laws of other daimiates that there were few laws observed throughout the country. Two maxims, however, seem to have been universally honoured, one being that a man and woman should not occupy the same seat; the other that a man should not enter a woman's house in the absence of her husband.

Sources of information for the above period: the *Teiyei Shikimoku*, 貞永式目; the *Teiyei Shikimoku-tsuika*;

the *Shimpen Shikimoku-tsuika*, 斯篇式目追加; the *Asuma Kagami*, 吾妻鏡; the *Yomeiri-ki*, *Yomemukai no Koto*, *Sendenshō*, 仙傳抄, *Yōshomampitsu*, 擁書漫筆, *Kokkei Zōdan* 滑稽雜談, *Daibutsu Monogatari*, *Budōdenraiki* 武道傳來記, *Wakunshiori* 和訓栞, and the *Mukashi Mukashi Monogatari*.

V.—From the beginning of the Tokugawa age to the present day. Marriage laws underwent a great many changes during this time, but most of them are not of great importance. The following developments, however, are worthy of being noted:—

(1.) In the case of court-nobles and military men marriages could only be contracted after receiving the consent of the Shōgun. Court-nobles who had been allowed to marry the daughters of *Daimyō* were warned against borrowing money from the families into which they had married.

(2.) Proposed marriages even among *daimyō* or *hatamoto* had to be referred to the decision of the Shōgun.

The object of the above rules was to avoid formidable political combinations.

Many of the regulations passed by the Tokugawa Shōguns had the reduction of expenses as their chief object, and some of them descended to particulars which in most countries are left to individual choice.

The following restrictions were enforced :

(1.) No bride was to have a retinue of more than 30 *kago* (this was subsequently reduced to 10), and 50 oblong boxes (*nagamochi*).

(2.) Except in the case of very noted persons, the use of gilded trays, etc., was forbidden.

(3.) In the entertainments given at weddings two kinds of soup and five kinds of *sai** only were allowed. In the 7th year of the Tempō era this was further reduced to one kind of soup and one other dish. It was furthermore ordered that a local authority should be present to see that there was no extravagance. *Sake* was not to be taken to excess.

(4.) The presents given as tokens of espousal were to be confined to a suit of silk clothes and two girdles. These things were to be made up into one bundle.

(5.)* The price of congratulatory presents was fixed. For the purchase of a sword and dagger only five pieces of gold were allowed. Woven goods were to consist of two *tan* of silk: one piece of silver might be given for the purchase of *sake*.

(6.) There was no objection to a man's converting a concubine into a wife, but the fact had to be reported

* Anything taken with rice—side-dishes.

to the proper authorities and the ordinary marriage ceremony to be performed.

(7.) The exacting of congratulatory fees from *rich* and beggars and the refusal to allow them to cross rivers unless they paid such fees were strictly forbidden.

Marriage custom in the Tokugawa era underwent some modification. There were some things more worthy of notice

Instead of the *torii* used to be lit at the entrance gates of the bridegroom, lanterns were used. Different notices were given by the bride and bride-

groom as to the time the *torii* should reach the house of the latter. If the bride arrived too early, it was apt to be interpreted as an indication that she was highly delighted to be married and hence was pronounced to be "flattery." In consequence of this the wedding ceremony was sometimes delayed to a late hour. The bridegroom and his friends did their best to induce the bride to come early. It was customary to use white lanterns with green handles during this period. The number was regulated by the rank of the bride, etc. During the Kyowa period (A.D. 1801-1805) the wedding ceremonies were held at the day; hence the lanterns were all dispensed with.

It was customary for the bridal party to sing popular song together. This custom is still observed in the country.

Mr. Sekine gives the following brief account of the marriage customs in vogue among the middle classes during the past hundred years:—

When the preliminary negotiations between the parties are finished, the girl sends a messenger with a letter and certain presents to the house of her future husband. The man, in turn, sends a messenger to the girl to thank her for the presents. This messenger is received by the middleman and together they decide on the day of betrothal (*yuinō*). On that day a messenger is despatched by the future husband, carrying the presents which are to serve as tokens of the espousal, which usually consist of money to buy silk clothes and two girdles, fish and *sake*. These presents are received by the middleman, who spreads them out in the guests' room, where he entertains the messenger; after which he furnishes him with a written receipt for the presents. The girl usually despatches a messenger to acknowledge and thank him for the visit, but sends no presents. A lucky day is then chosen for the commencement of the conveyance of the bride's personal effects, which in the case of a well-to-do person takes two or three days. The man in charge of these effects is entertained by the middleman. On the day before the wedding the bride sends presents to the bridegroom. These consist of silk clothes and a

dress suit (*kami-shimo*), a girdle, and a fan, their value corresponding to the presents given to the bride. On the night before the wedding a woman called *kane-oya** is employed to blacken the teeth. On the wedding day, the bride, arrayed in a white kimono and with her face entirely covered with a white hood, goes out for the bridegroom's house, at the entrance of which she is met by a woman who conducts her to the room in which the ceremony is to be held. When seated herself, the bridegroom arrives and sits down. This is a signal for the removal of the hood from the bride's face. The dinner is then served, commencing with clam soup, which is considered an emblem of union, and followed by various dishes. An important part of the meal consists of the drinking of what is called the *sansan kudo*, that is "three times three, nine times," wine being taken three times out of three different-sized cups, making in all nine drinks. The bride then retires and puts on a coloured dress, after which she is presented to her future father-in-law, mother-in-law and relations, on which occasion she drinks or feigns to drink, for custom requires more, a number of times. Three days after the ceremony the heads of the two houses to which the bride and bridegroom belong exchange presents. A few days after

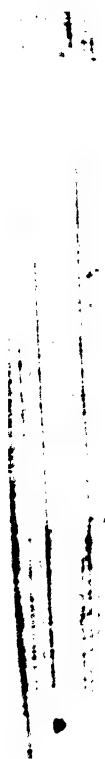
For the day parent.

the wedding, it is customary for the newly married couple to pay a visit to the parents of the bride. This is called *sato-biraki*.

The customs observed to-day differ little from those in vogue at the close of the Tokugawa era. The new laws about to be put in operation* however, will gradually efface the memory of ancient customs. For this reason, Mr. Sekine informs us, he has considered it important to place on record a detailed account of the latter. The subject of marriage in ancient Japan has as yet received scant attention at the hands of foreigners. The sources of information indicated by Mr. Sekine furnish abundant material for a more exhaustive treatment of the subject.

The books referred to by Mr. Sekine for the above period are: the *Kōbu Hōsei*, 公武法制; *Ōchoku Jūhachijō*, 應勅十八條; *Buke Shohatto*, 武家諸法度; *Gotōke Reijō*, 御當家令條; *Reijōroku*, 令條錄; *Ōsedasare-tome*, 被仰出留; *Mukaski Mukaski Monogatari*, *Chirizuka Monogatari*, 塵塚談, and the *Konrei Ryakushiki*.

* They are now actually in force.





JAPAN IN DAYS OF YORE.

X.

A DARING CONSPIRACY.

CHAPTER I.

WHEN Toyotomi Hideyoshi had completed the victories which gave him absolute power over the entire empire of Japan, and had retired to his castle at Ōsaka to enjoy his well-earned repose, it was his desire that the people of his birthplace, situated in the district of Aichi, in the province of Owari, should come and settle in the wealthy city where he had taken up his residence and there pursue their several callings. Among those who came was a certain dyer named Yoshida Jiemon, who was honoured by having entrusted to him all the dyeing required by the court of Hideyoshi. This was in the years A.D. 1573-91.

On the death of Hideyoshi, in the 8th month of the 3rd year of Keichō [A.D. 1598], one of his five chief ministers, Ishida Mitsunari, made preparations at his castle of Sawayama (now Hikone), to commence hostilities against Tokugawa Ieyasu. The dyer Jiemon

went to the castle of Ishida to dye clothes for the various banners and screens; but, the castle shortly after falling into the hands of Ieyasu, Jiemon, with the rest, was taken prisoner. On its being discovered, however, that he had taken no part in the fight, he was released. Deprived of his patron, Jiemon wandered about from place to place, and at last settled down in the post-town of Yui, in the district of Fuji, in the province of Suruga. As Jiemon was an industrious and skilful workman, he soon laid by a little money, and, finding that he was in a position to marry, took to himself a wife, by whom he had a child born on the 5th month of the 10th year of Keichō [1605 A.D.], and whom he called Fujitarō. In the following year the mother died.

Now from his earliest years Fujitarō showed a great love for anything of a military nature. When only five or six years old it was his delight, when he could obtain his father's permission, to get a number of playmates and go with them to the bank of the river, and there, constructing castles and fortresses, carry on a mimic warfare, he invariably assuming the command. Jiemon's wish, however, was that his son should become a priest, and at the age of seven Fujitarō was accordingly sent to a neighbouring temple called Seikōji to be initiated into the profession. Hitherto the boy had only displayed his

aptitude for warlike sports, but now he showed that he was also possessed of extraordinary powers of memory. One day, shortly after his arrival at the temple, there was a debating assembly held, at which some two hundred priests were present. Fujitarō listened attentively to all that went on, and that night astonished his guardian, the priest of the temple, by repeating to him the different views that had been expressed by the various priests on the subject under discussion.

There happened to be living with the priest at this time a certain friend of his, a *rōnin* named Takamatsu Hambei, who was an experienced soldier and an accomplished scholar in Chinese literature. Under his tuition the priest accordingly placed Fujitarō, and in both branches of learning his progress was equally rapid and astonishing.

In the nineteenth year of Keichō [1614 A.D.] Ieyasu came marching through the province of Suruga at the head of an army on his way to Ōsaka to wage war against the son of Hideyoshi and his followers. Certain old men in the village expressed great doubts whether Ieyasu would be successful, as the castle of Ōsaka was known to be the strongest in the country and was reported to be garrisoned by something like a hundred and seventy thousand men. This was said in the hearing of

Fujitarō, who told the old gossips that they had better be going about their business of planting *daikon* instead of talking such nonsense. The men were angry at hearing such remarks from a boy, but Fujitarō said:—"No castle, however strong, nor garrison, however numerous, can stand long if their commanders are incompetent and fools."

This saying of the boy's proved to be true, for in the following year the Ōsaka troops were utterly defeated, and the son of Hideyoshi, in despair, committed *harakiri*.

One day, Fujitarō asked his teacher what kind of a man Hideyoshi had been. Hambei told him that he was nothing but the son of a farmer in the Aichi district, and that it was only by his abilities, his wisdom, and his valour that he had succeeded in becoming the first man in the country. This set Fujitarō thinking that though he was but a dyer's son, yet if he possessed the mental power of Hideyoshi, there was no reason why he should not attain to a position as eminent as that reached by the Taikō.

Feeling that he needed to ally himself, at least by name, to some noble ancestry, he asked Hambei whom he considered the greatest general that Japan had produced. Hambei replied that Kusunoki Masashige was certainly entitled to that position, inasmuch as he com-

bined the qualities of wisdom, valour, and benevolence. So Fujitarō, because he had been born in the village of Yui, called himself Yui Tachibana Shōsetsu Mimbunosuke, thus making his family name the same as that of the illustrious general.*

Shortly after this, Jiemon was seized with a fatal illness, and, as he lay on his death-bed, he sent for Fujitarō, now called Shōsetsu, and said to him:—"As I am about to die, I leave with you a precious heirloom, which has been in my family for many generations, having come to me from my brother Jirobei, who was a skilful fencer." He then produced a famous classical Chinese work in eight volumes on the art of war and military tactics, and gave it to his son as a parting gift. He also requested that within seven days after his death the boy's head might be shaved and he be devoted to the priesthood, so that by his holy life he might atone for the sins of his ancestors and appease their spirits: he earnestly desired the priest to see that his instructions were carried out.

Three days after the death of his father it was reported that Shōsetsu had suddenly become deaf and dumb. His guardian, the priest, took him to all the

* Kusunoki Masashige was descended from the famous family of Tachibana, hence the boy's wish to be called by that name.

doctors of the village; but their remedies, instead of being of any service, apparently made him worse. He seemed to have completely lost his senses. He teased and struck the priest's child, till it was nearly mad; he destroyed the sacred relics of the temple; he placed himself upon the altar among the holy idols of Buddha and so conducted himself that the good people of the village were grieved at the sad change in one who had been noted for his good qualities and great promise, and looked upon him as one stricken by the curse of the gods. Be that as it may, his conduct became so uncontrollable that the priest was forced to send him away from the temple, and place him under the care of his uncle, a man named Seibei, who was a blacksmith by trade.

After Shōsetsu had remained some twenty days in Seibei's house, his madness seemed to depart, but he still remained deaf and dumb. When the weather was fine, he made the household understand that he wanted his midday meal prepared for him, and off he would go into the country, and return no more until night-fall. But to this Seibei made no objection, Shōsetsu could be made to render no service in the house, and this was the only way to keep him out of mischief. This state of things lasted for five years, when, one day Shōsetsu, coming to

his uncle's side, astonished him by saying:—"Uncle Seibei, it was my father's dying request I should, seven days after his death, have my head shaved and become a priest. Now, having heard stories of the great Hideyoshi from Hambei, my teacher at the temple, I determined that I would attempt to rival the deeds of that hero, the more so that I detested the priesthood. For this reason I have, while living under your roof the last five years, pretended to be deaf and dumb. But you must not think that I have been wasting these precious years. While I have gone out into the country daily, it has not been for the purpose of fishing or idly spending my time. I have been learning to swim, to run, and to jump with a bamboo stick. I have been acquiring, too, a knowledge of fencing and spear exercise. I have learned to ride, on horses left by the farmers in the fields, and every leisure moment I have employed in studying the books presented to me by my father on his death-bed. I have also observed the country and its natural advantages in a time of war. I now intend to go on a *musha-shugyō** for a period of five years, and learn the art of fencing and other military qualifications from such good masters as I shall meet during my wanderings."

* For an explanation of this term *vide supra*, p. 84, foot-note.

With much reluctance his uncle granted him permission to follow his desires, and, bidding him farewell, gave him a fine sword as a parting gift.

The first step that Shōsetsu took after leaving his uncle's house was to visit a neighbouring shrine. After having performed his devotions, he wrote on one of the cherry blossoms hanging near the following words :—

"Never again shall

be paid,

"Unless in rich

arrayed."

Then, proceeding to the province of Kawachi, he visited the birthplace of Kusunoki Masashige, and also the castle on Mount Honzō which the great general, with but comparatively few men, had successfully defended against the overwhelming forces of Hōjō. Thence, going to the famous temple dedicated to Hachiman at Tsuboi, at the foot of a large pine tree at the back of the temple, he buried a banner resembling the one Masashige had used, together with a family record of the great warrior which he (Shōsetsu) had made out when he was twelve years old. This he placed in a strong box with the characters Kusunoki Tachibana Masashige, Kawachi-no-Hangwan. Then, leaving Kawachi, he went to the provinces of Kaga and Echizen.

One evening, as he was passing through a place on the sea-coast called Sabae, he found himself benighted, and was therefore compelled to enter a temple for a night's rest. Before he fell asleep, some one came to the shrine, prayed and made an offering and then went away. Anxious to see what the stranger had offered, Shōsetsu arose, and found that a freshly-severed head had been placed before the altar. He took it up and hid it, and then went away into a corner of the temple to rest. Without, the moon was shining brightly, but the interior of the shrine was shrouded in darkness. Shortly after, the stranger returned, and, finding the head that he had offered was no longer where he had placed it, commenced to search for it on hands and knees over the floor of the temple. Shōsetsu, making no sound, remained crouched in his corner. At last the stranger approached the spot where he was, and, touching him with his hands, commenced feeling him to see what kind of a being he was. Shōsetsu bore the inspection without a movement for a moment or two, but finally, unable to restrain himself any longer, burst into a loud laugh. The astonished stranger hurriedly demanded who he was and what was his business in the temple, and both went out into the moonlight. Shōsetsu then told him that his name was Yui, that he was a descendant of the famous

Kusunoki Masashige, and that he was now travelling on a *musha-shugyō*.

In reply to the inquiries of Shōsetsu, the stranger replied that he was a ~~vain~~ formerly a retainer of the house of Hōjō, by name Hambei. Shōsetsu then asked him for what reason he offered the head. He replied that he himself was on a *musha-shugyō*, and that the head was in fulfilment of a vow to make *kubitsuka*.*

Shōsetsu at once turned to Hambei, saying:—"We are both pursuing the same end, the attainment of military skill; let us see which is already the better man." The challenge was at once accepted, and each drew his sword. There they stood face to face, these two youths, the bright moonlight flashing on their skillfully wielded blades, whose clashing alone disturbed the silence of the lonely place. For several minutes the combat was waged desperately; when at last Hambei, receiving a slight wound, lowered his sword and said:—"Sir, I yield the victory to you. I am by a great deal

* In those days the most reckless of the young warriors sometimes take an oath before a certain god that they would bring the head of a man in each of the sixty-four provinces of Japan on their *musha-shugyō*. These heads they buried under small stones in each province, in order to induce the gods to cause them to become famous warriors: hence the term *kubitsuka*, head-mound.

your inferior. In future I shall consider myself as your pupil and retainer." Shōsetsu at once put up his sword, saying:—"Now we must go each his separate way, but some day or other we shall meet again in Edo." Thus they parted.

Shōsetsu now made his way southward, going to Shikoku. Thence he crossed to Kyūshū and went on to the island of Amakusa, everywhere taking lessons in fencing from whatever famous masters of the art he might meet, or trying his skill against those who had achieved distinction in swordmanship. After a while, crossing again to the mainland, he went to the province of Kii, and made the acquaintance of Sekiguchi Hayato, in the castle-town of Wakayama, who was the most renowned fencer in the whole province. Shōsetsu lost no time in having a trial with him, and succeeded in holding his own against him. Hayato accordingly engaged him as his chief assistant, and by the time he had held that position for a year or two, his fame became so great that the lord of the province desired to enroll him as one of his retainers. On account of some jealous interference, however, the intentions of the lord were frustrated, and Shōsetsu, leaving Wakayama, turned his steps northward. As he was passing across the plain of

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Kono, in the province of Mino, he met a young man dressed as a *komusō*.*

Entering into conversation with each other, Shōsetsu proposed that they should sit down on a stone by the wayside for a while and rest. There not being room for both on the stone, the young *komusō* bent his left hand over a young tree which grew by the roadside, and rested himself upon it while he related his history; which was, briefly, that he was a *rōnin* from Ōsaka named Katō Ichimon, whose father had been killed by Sakai Sanuki-no-Kami, but as Sanuki-no-Kami now held the office of regent of the Shōgun, he had been unable to avenge his father's death. At one time, when Sakai went as representative of the Shōgun to preside at a festival at the Zōjōji in Shiba where only women were permitted to be present, he had disguised himself as a woman, and gone to the festival with the intention of avenging his father's death by slaying his murderer, but he had been discovered and barely escaped with his life.

* A kind of fraternity, the members of which were distinguished by wearing deep hats reaching down to the chin, so that the face of the wearer could not be distinguished. They were mostly *samurai* in search of some enemy: their peculiar head-dress served to protect them against detection by the foe whose life they sought. The *komusō* were also provided with fifes, and on meeting each other, exchanged recognition by a few notes on the instrument. A want of knowledge of the meaning of such notes was held to be proof of inferiority.

His intention now was to perfect himself in swordmanship during his travels through the country, and to seize the first favourable opportunity of executing vengeance on his foe.

Shōsetsu was in no slight degree moved by what the youth told him, and said:—"I see that you are no ordinary man. You are quite right in thus pursuing the object of your revenge. I, too, have certain wishes to fulfil. Let us have a bout together and see how we stand in respect of skill. He that wins shall be master, and he that loses shall be follower; but however the match may end, we will both promise to assist each other in accomplishing our plans."

Ichimon agreed to this, and, breaking branches from the tree to serve in the place of swords, they set to. Shōsetsu overcame his adversary, and the latter, acknowledging himself his follower, they travelled on together for three days. Shōsetsu was now informed by his companion that a certain Kusunoki Fuden, a lineal descendant of the hero Kusunoki Masashige, was the most famous military tactician of the day. The two parted company, promising to resume their acquaintance at Edo on some future occasion.

CHAPTER II.

Shōsetsu, pursuing his journey northward, was passing over Iyahiko-yama, when he was attacked by a band of robbers numbering some seven or eight men. He managed to disarm five of them without, however, doing them much harm, when they begged for mercy, which was granted them. One of their number then stepped forward and said:—"My name is Kumagai Saburobei. I was formerly a retainer of the house of Takeda, the Earl of Kai, but I am now a *rōnin*, and the chief of a band of highwaymen, who number three hundred and eighty." Shōsetsu advised them all to return to some honest calling and proceed to Edo, where he promised to find employment for them all.

Shōsetsu then set out for Edo, where, on his arrival, he immediately called upon Kusunoki Fuden, the famous military professor of whom Ichiemon had told him, at his residence at Ushigome, and found that he had about three thousand pupils, many of whom were sons of *daimyō* or *samurai* of influence and position. He introduced himself, saying:—"I am Yui Shōsetsu, of such and such a province. Having heard of your great fame

during my travels, I have for some years past been desirous of being numbered among your pupils, and hence on my arrival in the capital, have come at once to apply for any vacant position, however humble, to which you may be pleased to appoint me."

Fuden replied that no one was allowed to take up permanent residence in his house without a surety, but that if he wished he might remain under his roof a few days and rest from the fatigues of his journey. Shōsetsu, determined to let no opportunity slip, gratefully accepted the offer, and did whatever was required of him in the most diligent and skilful manner. So much so, indeed, that by the time he had been a week in the house, Fuden, recognising his splendid abilities, told him that he might remain in his school, and that he would in his case waive the question of surety.

Shōsetsu therefore applied himself to his studies with extreme diligence, so that in a few years he surpassed his master's most famous pupils. During that time Fuden introduced him to most of the barons and men of rank, informing them that Shōsetsu was equal in all respects to himself both in literature and warlike accomplishments, and that henceforth their sons could receive their lessons from him. Indeed, in a short space of time the impression became general that Shōsetsu was superior to his master.

Fuden had many years before lost his wife, who had left him with an only child, a daughter named Koman, who was now sixteen years old, and a girl of great beauty, and who, in accordance with a wish expressed by her mother, was betrothed to her cousin Wada Mondo, a nephew of her mother.

Now Shōsetsu increased daily in favour with the barons at whose mansions he taught, and being made much of by persons of rank and wealth, permitted himself to be carried away by the evil spirit of ambition, and pondered how he should succeed to the position of his master Fuden and become the owner of a family inheritance of extreme value. Day by day the idea took possession of him, until at last he determined to carry it out even though crime might be necessary to its fulfilment. Not that he desired to possess himself of the wealth of his master's family or to become the husband of the beautiful Koman, as might well have been supposed. His sole wish was to have absolute control over the whole military school, and to obtain possession of two objects that were guarded in the family with the greatest care, which were the original copies of imperial decrees issued by the Emperor Godaigo and his son Prince Ōtō, which had come down to Fuden through many generations from the hands of his ancestor Kusunoki Masashige. For

Shōsetsu, who never for a moment lost sight of the great object of his life, the rivalling of the deeds of the hero Toyotomi Hideyoshi, knew full well that if he could induce people really to believe that he was an actual descendant of Fuden's noble ancestor, he would stand a greater chance of accomplishing his wishes and of commanding the services of a powerful and influential body of men as his pupils. He saw that he must have recourse to treachery to obtain what he desired, and I now proceed to relate how he set about gaining his ambitious ends.

In Fuden's house there dwelt at this time a young *samurai* who had fallen deeply in love with his master's pretty daughter, but he managed thus far so successfully to conceal his passion that no one but she whom he loved—and loved in vain—suspected its existence. Shōsetsu, however, keen-sighted and cunning as he was, soon saw and understood all. One day he took the young fellow, Kuroemon by name, aside, and told him in the most serious manner that he had something of the greatest importance to disclose to him, and that although the matter was of an extremely delicate nature, he trusted that their long intimacy might excuse his speaking about it. Kuroemon, greatly astonished, begged that he would speak unreservedly and tell him what had

happened. Shōsetsu then proceeded to tell him that their master Fuden had discovered that his daughter Koman, who was engaged to another man, was in love with some one in the house with whom she had been carrying on an intrigue, and that as he considered it a disgrace that his daughter should be in love with some one who was no better than a servant, he had determined to slay the man, and save the honour of his family. Shōsetsu then asked if it was he, Kuroemon, who was in love with Koman. Kuroemon replied that it was true, but he knew not whether his love were returned or no, as, although he had written to her, no answer had been vouchsafed to his letter.

Shōsetsu immediately remarked that it must have been the letter which had betrayed the secret, and that he had little doubt that Koman returned his passion, but that she had not dared to send a reply to his letter, from fear of her father discovering that she was in love with one of his retainers. Kuroemon said that in that case he would use every effort to obtain her in marriage, and Shōsetsu, having thus worked on the poor fellow's feelings, told him that he would do everything to aid him in carrying out his wishes, but that he must promise to act as he should suggest. Kuroemon willingly gave his promise, and Shōsetsu then said that the first

thing to be done was to get rid of Fuden, and Mondo, the girl's betrothed.

Kuroemon, entirely blinded by his passion, and believing that Shōsetsu was swayed by no other motive than a desire to aid him through feelings of friendship, replied that he would permit nothing to stand in the way of obtaining Koman.

After much consideration, Shōsetsu told Kuroemon to go and tell Mondo that Fuden had said that although his daughter was engaged to him (Mondo), he had no intention that she should marry him, for Mondo showed no attention to him or his daughter, but was a man of weak mind, spending his time solely in idleness and debauchery. He had therefore determined to marry his daughter to Shōsetsu, who should inherit all his estates. At the same time, as the engagement could not well be broken off, he could only see one way out of it, which was to get rid of Mondo, and he had therefore determined upon his death.

Kuroemon did exactly as he was told, and repeated the whole story to Mondo, who was utterly confounded, but whose rage was, as Shōsetsu had desired, directed entirely against the innocent Fuden, who had not even known that anything had passed between his daughter and one of his retainers.

On the 11th day of the 10th month of the 9th year of Kan-ei [1632 A.D.], Fuden said to Shōsetsu:—"Tomorrow is the day on which I usually invite my friends to drink tea with me; but as I am called away and shall not return until late in the evening, postpone the party until the 13th. Shōsetsu promised that he would do so, and, immediately seeking Kuroemon, told him to go at once to the residence of Mondo and inform him that the gathering had been postponed until the 13th, on which occasion Fuden had determined to poison him. He was also to hint that Fuden would probably pass a lonely spot at a certain hour, and that as he had made up his mind to Mondo's destruction, the latter would do well to be beforehand, and, lying in wait there, to kill him (Fuden) as he passed. When Mondo heard this, he said to himself:—"There can be nothing wrong in my slaying the man who is treacherously seeking to take my life." So he determined to act upon the hint thrown out to him.

At about ten o'clock, Fuden, in ignorance of the treacherous plot laid for his destruction, was returning, accompanied by the trusted Shōsetsu, when, as they approached the fatal spot, Shōsetsu stopped, under pretence of adjusting his sandal. Just as Fuden was turning a corner, he was assailed by Mondo, and, before he could defend himself, fell pierced to death by a spear.

Shōsetsu, drawing his sword, ran forward, and crying :—
“What coward dares assail my master?” with one cut laid Mondo dead at his feet. Then, running to the house, he told how the dastardly Mondo had attacked and slain his revered master, and that in his rage he (Shōsetsu) had cut the fellow down and killed him on the spot. At this announcement the whole household was overwhelmed with grief for the loss of the master whom all had loved so well, and loud were the praises showered on Shōsetsu for his courage in taking such a swift revenge.

Now as Fuden and Mondo, who was to have been his successor, were both dead, the question arose as to who should inherit the estates. The relatives and principal pupils, having consulted together, concluded that Shōsetsu was the only one who was competent to carry on the school which had been founded and conducted with such ability by their late master. So on the 16th of the month he was installed in the place of Fuden. But the poor girl Koman was so shocked by the terrible fate of her father and lover that she refused all comfort, and becoming a priestess, retired to the nunnery of Kamakura to spend the rest of her life in works of devotion.

Shōsetsu told Kuroemon that he had done all in his power to aid him, even to sacrificing both his beloved teacher and the unfortunate Mondo, but that Koman was

so overcome by these misfortunes that it was impossible to induce her to listen to any proposal of marriage, and thus the scheme had failed. He warned him, however, that if the tale should ever leak out he would be punished as one of the principals, and then, presenting him with a small estate at Kōji-machi, part of his ill-gotten spoils, and the sum of a thousand *ryō*, told him to settle down upon it and to hold his peace with regard to the whole proceeding.

Shōsetsu was now the actual master of Fuden's school, whose numbers had increased greatly since he first joined Fuden in its management. He was also the possessor of the coveted manuscripts, so that now no one could doubt that he was the actual descendant of the great warrior Kusunoki Masashige. Not forgetful of his promises, he called to him the *rōnin* and the band of highwaymen whom he had encountered during his travels. Kanai Hambei, Katō Ichiemon, Kumagai Saburobei, one and all responded to his invitation, and with their numerous followers came to his residence in Edo.

Shōsetsu found, however, that he could not keep so many men at his own house and at his own expense. Moreover, he feared that the presence of such a powerful and reckless body of followers might arouse suspicion and bring him into discredit with the authorities. He

therefore used the influence which he had acquired with various barons and rich families to get them engaged as teachers, and his patrons, feeling sure that Shōsetsu would recommend no one who did not possess the necessary ability, were eager to engage their services, and thus he obtained employment for nearly the whole of them. Neither did he forget his uncle Shōbei, who had befriended him in former days, but establishing an iron-works shop in connection with his school, put him in charge of it. He also set up an armourer's shop, at the head of which he placed the son of a famous armourer who had been sent away from his home for misconduct and who had applied for and obtained the protection of Shōsetsu. In these shops he found employment for a number of pupils and followers.

In acting thus he had a two-fold object: namely, to keep his men constantly at work, so that no feeling of discontent might be allowed to arise among them, and also that, when he should find it convenient to cause a disturbance, he might have a body of followers perfectly qualified to make and provide weapons and warlike appliances. So that no suspicions of his intention might be aroused, he opened a number of small shops in the neighbourhood of the school for the sale of firearms, spears, swords, armour, and such like; and, calling the

attention of the various barons to the excellence of the articles manufactured under his own superintendence, requested that they would honour him by purchasing from him whenever they required supplies. In consequence he received from them large orders, and so extensive did this business become as to fill up his time. Seriously was it conducted that in the space of ten years he found that he had amassed between twenty and thirty thousand *ryō* from the profits of his trade.





CHAPTER III.

Now there was a certain young man named Marubashi Chūya, a son of the Earl of Tosa, who had turned *rōnin* in consequence of his father having been deprived of all his estates after his defeat by Tokugawa Ieyasu. He was but a child when his father was ruined, and had fled with his mother to Yamagata in the northern province of Dewa, where he was brought up. He was now a full-grown, powerful young fellow, well-skilled in the use of the sword, and having heard of the fame of Shōsetsu, came to Edo with a friend named Okumura, an archer of renown, and together they called upon Shōsetsu, who, willing to see what skill they really possessed, allowed them a trial, but found that they were no match for him in either the use of the sword or the bow. Burning to avenge his father's wrongs, Chūya remained in Edo awaiting a favourable opportunity to take part in a rising against the Shōgun's Government, but of his designs he had hitherto said nothing to Shōsetsu. One day, when Shōsetsu was on a visit to him, in the course of conversation Chūya asked him about his family, and learned that he was a descendant of Kusunoki Masashige.

Chūya then told him who he was, of the sad fate of his father and the loss of his estates, and they were thus led on to speak of their designs. They mutually agreed that no time must be lost, but that they would at once arrange some plan of action, and each bound himself by a solemn pledge to assist the other. From this time forth they held frequent consultation, in which a friend of Chūya named Shibata, of Yamagata, a man of great bodily strength, was invited to take part, but their plans were never made known to Okumura, whom they knew to be loyal to the Government.

One day, during the 15th year of Kan-ei [A.D. 1638], Shōsetsu said in the presence of a large number of his pupils, that he had had a wonderful dream the previous night, in which it seemed that a warrior in court-dress had appeared to him, and, addressing him, said:—"You are my lineal descendant and if you require a proof of this, dig at the root of the great pine tree behind the temple of Hachiman at Tsuboi in Kawachi." Shōsetsu, however, laughingly remarked that, although the dream was so vivid as to have caused a deep impression, he looked upon all dreams as senseless kind of things.

Some of the pupils said, however, that the dream might have some meaning, and offered to go and see if what had been communicated to Shōsetsu in such a strik-

ing manner could possibly be true. Accordingly they went to the place spoken of, and there, to their astonishment, they found an old box, evidently buried in the ground many years before, which contained the flag of the mighty warrior and the pedigree of the house of Kusunoki. Not in the least suspecting that Shōsetsu could in any way be concerned in its having been placed in the spot where it was found, they returned in great haste with the precious emblems, and announced in what miraculous manner the revelation of their existence had been made. By this scheme the fame of Shōsetsu was greatly enhanced, and he obtained increased influence over his followers. From this time he commenced to take a few of his most trusted pupils into his confidence, and to make known to them his secret designs. At the same time he set about his preparations for the outbreak that was to decide his fate.

He had now arrived at the age of thirty-six, but would entertain no idea of marriage, for he well knew the risk that he was running and the uncertainty of his future, and wished to leave behind no family who might be disgraced by his failure.

It is now necessary to go back a year or two in the narrative, to the commencement of the 13th year of Kan-ei [A.D. 1636]. At this time Yomosaku, an indus-

trious, simple-minded farmer, who made his living by his daily toil in cultivating the small portion of land that he owned, was hard at work with his two daughters Miyagino and Shinobu, the eldest of whom was about thirteen years old, weeding the newly-sown rice field close to their dwelling in the village of Sakato in Ōshū. Along the road that passed the field where they were at work was coming a *samurai* named Soga Danshichi, a man of about twenty-seven years of age, a powerful fellow, and one of the most noted fencers among the retainers of Katakura Kojūrō, a vassal of the Earl of Sendai, whose estate at the castle-town of Shiraishi was not far distant. Little Shinobu, having her back turned towards the road, and not suspecting that any one was passing, happened to throw behind her some weeds that she had just pulled up, which, as ill luck would have it, struck the *samurai's* trousers. The fellow, enraged at what he chose to consider the insult of having dirt thrown at him by a peasant, threatened to kill the girl. The terrified father prostrated himself before the *samurai* praying that his child's life might be spared, but the bulley's anger was not appeased, and, with one stroke of his sword, he severed the peasant's head from his body, leaving the two poor children to mourn over the corpse of their murdered parent.

Returning home, the children told their dreadful tale to their mother, who was lying seriously ill at the time. The poor woman was so horrified by the news that she died in a few hours. The orphans were accordingly taken to the house of their aunt, who offered to adopt them; but, after a few days, the girls requested that they might be permitted to go in search of some employment, as they did not wish to be dependent on their relatives. At first the aunt refused, but as the girls persisted in their request, she at last gave an unwilling consent. Accordingly, collecting together a few clothes, and taking the little money that their parents had saved, they left their aunt's house and went out alone into the world. It was not, however, employment that they were going to seek, but revenge. Young as they were they could appreciate the shameful wrong they had suffered by their father's murder and were determined to seek redress. After many a weary day's journey, sustained by their determination, they at last reached Edo.

The first thing these two friendless children did was to set about finding out who was the most famous teacher of sword and spear exercise in the capital. With this intention they frequented the most crowded places, such as Ryōgoku-bashi and Asakusa, and listened attentively to the conversation of the *samurai* and

students who resorted there. The man whose praises seemed to them in everyone's mouth was a man called Shōsetsu. He appeared to be the greatest teacher of fencing in the city. Finding out where he lived, they mustered up courage to call on him at his residence at Ushigome; and, being received, related to him the whole of their sad story: how they had seen their father murdered, and how their mother had died of grief, and that, though young in years, they had determined on revenge; that they were entirely ignorant of the use of weapons; but that, strengthened by their filial love, they had ventured to call on him, the greatest master in the country, and entreat him to instruct them.

Shōsetsu was greatly moved by their story, and not only promised to teach them, but said that he would take them entirely under his protection. He took them into his house for a term of three years, and placed them under the care of his mistress. They were instructed in the use of the sword, the spear, the sickle,* and the dirk known as the *shuriken*.†

* These sickles resembled very much in size and shape those used for ordinary field purposes with the exception of having a chain about six feet in length hanging from the handle. At the end of the chain was a sexagonal piece of iron, which could be whirled round so as to entangle the sword-arm of an opponent.

† This consisted of a flat piece of steel, about six inches long, pointed and sharpened at one end, which was thrown at an opponent so as to injure him in some vital part.

They applied themselves with great diligence and made rapid progress. When the term of three years had expired, Shōsetsu told them to continue their studies one year longer. At the end of that time he matched them against his ordinary pupils. The girls in most instances came off victorious, often beating even those who had been practising for a number of years. Shōsetsu was delighted at this result of his pains, and told them that they might now go back to their native province and seek their revenge with a certainty of obtaining it if skill could avail.

Of the two sisters who had thus given such extraordinary evidence of their prowess, the elder was most skilled in the use of the sickle and in dirk-throwing, while the younger could better wield the *naginata*, or halberd. Shōsetsu, therefore, presented them with these weapons when they were about to leave his house, as a means by which they might avenge the murder of their father. He also furnished them with the clothes they would require for their journey, and ordered three of his stalwart followers, Matsuda, Shibata, and Tsubonai to escort them on their road. The last-named of these men had been one of that body of highwaymen who attacked Shōsetsu years before in the mountain-pass in Echigo.

The five travellers, being fully equipped, started on

the road towards the famous town of Sendai. On their arrival at Shiraishi, they petitioned Katakura Kōjūrō, the vassal of the Earl of Sendai, that the two girls Miyagino and Shinobu, might be allowed to challenge to mortal combat his retainer Shiga Danshichi, for the dastardly murder of their father four years before.

Katakura referred the request to Date Masamune, the Earl of Sendai, and on receiving a favourable reply granted the required permission.

Preparations were made for the combat to take place in public, a space of two hundred feet square being fenced off with bamboo for the purpose. On the day appointed, Masamune, attended by Katakura Kōjūrō and seventy of his chief vassals, appeared on the scene to witness the fight, and from far and near so large a number of people flocked in, that the services of three hundred foot-soldiers were required to keep the ground.

Punctually at the hour named, Danshichi entered the lists at one end, and, with his drawn sword in his hand, advanced to meet the little Shinobu, who had entered at the opposite end, and who was armed only with the spear which Shōsetsu had given her. An officer whose duty it was to see that the combatants were properly accoutred discovered that Danshichi had taken the cowardly precaution of wearing chain-armour under his clothes,

and as this was directly in contravention of the rules of a duel *à outrance*, it was stripped off him by command of Masamune, amidst expressions of scorn and contempt from the spectators.

The combatants were then placed opposite each other and the signal given to begin the fight. Cautiously they commenced, and for a time neither obtained any advantage. The lookers-on turned pale and hardly trusted themselves to draw breath as Shinobu lost ground, but relief was felt as she put forth all the energy of which she was capable, and, dexterously managing her weapon, forced her foe to retreat before her and so recovered the advantage she had previously lost. An interval for rest was then called, when it was discovered that both combatants were slightly wounded. On the renewal of the contest Shinobu's place was taken by her elder sister Miyagino, who was armed with the sickle and a few dirks. A desperate fight ensued, and at last Miyagino succeeded in planting a dirk in each of the eyes of her opponent. Blinded by this, Danshichi struck wildly in every direction with his sword, until Miyagino entangled his right arm with the chain attached to her sickle, and then with one blow cut off both his arms. Calling Shinobu, she directed her to sever the head of their foe from his body, which was at once done, to the admira-

tion of all present. Thus was the girls' long desired revenge accomplished.

Both the girls were sought in marriage by members of high families in the neighbourhood, and received numerous offers of adoption. They declined all, saying that though they had accomplished their cherished purpose, it had necessitated the shedding of blood, which only a life of retirement and devotion could expiate. They therefore retired at once to Kamaoka where they took the vows of nuns. This event occurred in the 17th year of Kan'ei [A. D. 1640], and caused the name of Shōsetsu to ring throughout the land. Everywhere his kindness was extolled as equal to his well known wisdom and prowess.

CHAPTER IV.

My story now returns to Shōsetsu. Not long after the duel described above he began to take active steps towards the carrying out of his deep-laid plans. First of all he made a close imitation of the seal of the wealthy Earl of Kii, by the use of which he was enabled to collect large sums of money ; but he took the precaution of making this imitation differ from the real seal in some minor particulars which would escape casual observation, for reasons which will appear later on.

Shōsetsu then called together the principal men among his party, and a consultation was held as to the course to be pursued, when the following steps were decided upon. One Aritake was to undermine the powder-magazines within the Shōgun's castle at Edo, working from without the moat. A train thus laid would be fired at a given signal and the magazines blown up, while some of his accomplices were to set fire at the same time to other parts of the city. During the confusion which would ensue, three hundred men disguised in dresses bearing the Tokugawa hollyhock crest, under the leadership of Shibata, were to enter the castle in a body

as though they desired to render assistance to or insure the safety of the Shōgun, and, taking advantage of the opportunity thus afforded, seize the person of the Shōgun and bear him off at once to Nikkō. To secure a safe retreat, Marubashi Chūya, at the head of one thousand men, was to follow Shibata to Nikkō, and after crossing the river at Kurihashi, break down the embankments and flood the country, so as to prevent pursuit by the Shōgun's troops. Katō Ichiemon and Kumagai Saburobei were to proceed to Kyōto at the head of a large force, and on hearing that Edo and Sumpu, in Suruga, were in flames, were to immediately attack the Imperial palace, seize the person of the *Mikado*, confine him in a temple on Hieizan, and there compel him to issue a decree for the chastisement and deposition of the Tokugawa Shōgun. Kanai Hambei and Yoshida Katsuemon were to proceed to Ōsaka and there incite the *rōnin* to join their enterprise, and hold themselves in readiness to render assistance to their fellow-conspirators at Kyōto if necessary. In the meantime Shōsetsu, at the head of his remaining followers, was to advance to Suruga, capture the castle of Sumpu, and, having taken up a strong position on Kunō-zan, was to be prepared to support the force at either Kyōto or Ōsaka. Nikkō was decided upon for their head-quarters.

In the first year of Keian [A. D. 1648], some business or another took Chūya over Benkei-bashi, where he could not help stopping to examine well the castle and the moat, while he pondered how best he would be able to cross the latter in making an attack on the castle. While so occupied, Matsudaira Izu-no-Kami, who had been appointed Regent during the illness of the Shōgun, passed by and noticed Chūya's fixed attention. Calling to him an official of the *Bakufu* named Amano Yagorō, who happened to be passing at the time, he demanded if he knew who the man was that was so attentively scanning the castle. Amano replied that the man in question was Marubashi Chūya, the noted fencer.

On hearing this, Izu-no-Kami ordered Yagorō to approach him, and address him as follows:—"You have the appearance of a man who is plotting some mischief. I will not order your arrest now, but remember, if ever an outbreak occurs you will be the first whose arrest I shall secure."

Izu-no-Kami then proceeded on his way, telling Chūya, in addition, that he had heard of his great skill in the use of the spear, and that in consequence he would receive him at his residence whenever he chose to call upon him.

In the 4th month of the 4th year of Keian [A. D.

1651], the third Shōgun of the TOKUGAWA line, IEMITSU, died. Shōsetsu and Chūya decided that the time had now arrived for carrying their plans into execution; so they called a meeting of the leaders of their party for the 25th of the month, at Dōkan-yama, a noted place of entertainment in Edo, to discuss the steps which should be taken. It was then decided that those who were to proceed to Kyōto and Ōsaka should set out for their destinations at once, and that Shōsetsu should secretly supply them with funds.

So, the day following, Katō Ichiemon and Kumagai Saburobei left for Kyōto, and Kanai Hambei and Yoshida Katsuemon for Ōsaka, the men under their command getting out of Edo so as to escape observation, and in an equally cautious manner taking up their quarters in the neighbourhood of the cities of Kyōto and Ōsaka. Shōsetsu provided them with money as he had promised, and these bands, as they quietly waited until the time for action arrived, gradually increased their force by persuading large numbers of *rōnin* in the neighbourhood to join them.

Shōsetsu handed to Chūya the sum of five thousand *ryō*, but the latter, however, deemed it insufficient to cover the expenses of his party at Edo, and being averse to apply to Shōsetsu for further assistance, set

about trying to collect more money on his own account. From an arrow-maker named Tōgorō he borrowed two hundred *ryō*, telling him that he would repay this sum on the 13th day of the 7th month.

So far matters had progressed favourably, but it was not long before events occurred which delayed the plans of action which had been agreed upon. News arrived from Kyōto that Kumagai Saburobei, the chief of the band of robbers who had attacked Shōsetsu in the mountains of Echigo years before, and who was now appointed to a command in the conspiracy, had been led into such extravagant expenditure at Kyōto that shame at the consequence of his imprudence had caused him to desert. Then Chūya was taken ill with fever and was in danger of disclosing the plot: for, becoming delirious, he imagined he was leading an attack, and called out in a loud voice:—"Shibata take the Shōgun to Nikkō, set the city on fire," and such like; so that Shōsetsu had hard work to keep him quiet.

When Chuya had fully recovered and Shōsetsu's preparations were considerably advanced, the latter called another meeting of his party on the night of the 18th of the 7th month at Dōkan-yama. Two thousand eight hundred of his followers then mustered, and it was resolved that a simultaneous attack should be made on

the castles of Edo and Sumpu on the 26th of that month, and that as soon as the news of these attacks should be received at Kyōto and Ōsaka, their partisans should put into immediate operation the plans which had been already agreed upon.

All being thus arranged, Shōsetsu left Edo on the 21st of the 7th month, the one thousand men who were to act immediately under his command having left the city in small bodies, so as not to attract attention, and shortly afterwards assembling at the rendezvous in the neighbourhood of Sumpu as agreed upon. To cover his expenses, Shōsetsu had continued to raise considerable sums of money by means of the forged seal of the Earl of Kii.

CHAPTER V.

Immediately after the departure of Shōsetsu, Shibata commenced his operation of undermining the powder-magazine in the castle, and laying plans whereby the city could be fired in numerous quarters at a given signal. As to Marubashi Chūya, he still considered it requisite to raise additional funds, not with the intention of betraying or thwarting Shōsetsu's plans, but because he felt convinced that the more money he could obtain the more effectually could he carry his plans into execution. Imbued with this notion, he set off on the evening of the 23rd day of the 7th month to the house of a wealthy merchant named Matabei, with whom he had become slightly acquainted, and tried to borrow of him five hundred *ryō*, stating as his reason for asking such a sum, that he had taken service with the Earl of Kaga, and required the money for his travelling expenses. He added that his appointment would enable him to repay the sum he desired to borrow in a very short time. This tale had no effect on the merchant, who declined to lend the money on such security. At last Chūya, thinking that as admission of the real purpose

for which the money was required would secure its being supplied, thus addressed the merchant:—"Now, to tell you the truth, the reason why I wish you to lend me the money is this. I am about to engage in a plot, the plans for which, having been laid for years, are now in course of being carried out at Sumpu, Kyōto, Ōsaka and Edo. At the present moment there is no obstacle to success but the want of money, so I therefore beg you to lend me the sum I require, and when success has crowned our attempt, I will return you ten times the amount I now wish to borrow from you." Matabei was greatly alarmed at what he heard, though he did not allow his face to betray his apprehension, but promised that by the next day he would place three thousand *ryō* at Chūya's disposal.

As soon, however, as Chūya retired, Matabei hastened to impart the information he had thus obtained to a mutual friend named Okumura. Okumura decided that the *Bakufu* should without loss of time be made acquainted with the whole affair, and accompanied Matabei at once to the residence of the Regent, Matsudaira Izu-no-Kami, to whom they related the circumstances of Chūya's confession.

Now ever since the meeting on the Benkei-bashi, Izu-no-Kami had had doubts about Chūya. On hearing the report

of the informants, he at once suspected that some dangerous plot was about to be put into execution. His suspicions were confirmed when the arrow-maker soon after appeared, and with fear and trembling informed him that Chūya had shortly before borrowed money from him, which was to have been repaid on the 13th of that month, but that on application to Chūya, not only was the money not forthcoming, but that he (the arrow-maker) had been forced to pledge himself that he would join the conspiracy in which Chūya was engaged.

Izu-no-Kami was now convinced that a great danger threatened the State, and that prompt steps must be taken to meet it, so he went at once to the *Bakufu*, and giving out that the Shōgun was dangerously ill, summoned the Earls of Mito and Owari to present themselves in council without delay. On their arrival a consultation was held, and orders at once issued to all the barons in Edo to place the city under the strictest guard, while messengers were immediately despatched to the Mayors of Sumpu, Kyōtō, and Ōsaka, informing them of the discovery of a plot, and advising them to take prompt measures to prevent its outbreak.

Izu-no-Kami next ordered Ishiya Shōgen, one of the Mayors of Edo, to despatch seventy constables to the residence of Marubashi Chūya and there arrest him at once.

By the morning of the 24th day of the 7th month every part of the city was closely guarded by the retainers of the various barons. When the *Bakufu* officers arrived at Chūya's house, he was in bed, sleeping off the effects of an over-indulgence in *sake*, yet, as soon as one of the officers incautiously approached too near him, he sprang up in his bed, seized his sword, and made the poor wretch feel the full force of that strength for which he was so notorious, a second officer similarly paid for his temerity with his life, and a concerted attack by two others was easily repelled. A rush was then made by all the officers on Chūya. One after another they fell, but eventually their numbers proved too much for the conspirator, who, seeing that further resistance was vain, attempted to commit suicide, but was prevented, seized, bound, and carried off, together with his wife and children, for examination before the Chief Magistrate. A large sum of money that was discovered in his house was also taken possession of. Shibata escaped to Suruga, but upwards of three hundred and seventy arrests were made that day in Edo. Barrels of gunpowder were discovered in various parts of the city, with trains ready laid, so that at a given signal the city would have burst into flames in numerous quarters.

When the *Bakufu* order to arrest Shōsetsu reached

Ōkubo Genba-no-Kami, the Commandant of the Castle of Sumpu, he immediately collected a force of one hundred and fifty warriors, and then summoned Shōsetsu to appear before him. Shōsetsu's followers urged their leader to appeal to arms, as no other alternative was left him, but Shōsetsu dissuaded them from such rashness, saying:—"If there was any chance that the desire I have for so many years cherished could be realized and my faithful and beloved followers rewarded for their devotion, I would not hesitate to lead you to battle, but I foresee that any such attempt would now end in failure. It would be but the means of unnecessary bloodshed, and would also entail undeserved misery and hardship on many. It is better, therefore, that I should die, and cause as little suffering as possible to others." These words concluded, Shōsetsu committed *seppuku*, and his example was immediately followed by his principal officers.

On the 29th day of the 7th month Itakura Suō-no-Kami and Kuki Hizen-no-Kami, the Mayors of Kyōto, sent seventy detectives and three hundred constables to arrest the conspirators there, and, after desperate fighting, Katō Ichiemon and others were captured and put to death, after being subjected to cruel torture in order to induce them to confess. A strict search was made for Kumagai Saburobei, who had previously deserted from Katō's party,

but his whereabouts could never be discovered, and it is not known even to this day what became of him.

At Ōsaka both Hambei and Yoshida Katsumon were in a great state of anxiety when they heard that Saburobei had deserted to Katō, and, receiving no good news from the north, Yoshida set off in that direction in order to see if he could pick up any information on the road. At Yamazaki he encountered Hori Nizaemon, the captain of Arima, at the head of one hundred men, who had been despatched to capture the Ōsaka conspirators. By them he was arrested, and eventually put to death. On receipt of this sad news Kanai Hambei made his escape, but committed suicide on the 3rd day of the 8th month.

To return once more to Edo. Marubashi Chūya was subjected to the most cruel torture by stone, fire, and water, but would not confess one iota, declaring that he would not utter a word to implicate others even if boiled in oil. His wife and two children were then brought into his presence, and he was informed that they would be made to undergo the same torture that had been applied to him if he still refused to confess. Strong-minded as he was, Chūya was not proof against this abominable cruelty, and confessed that Shibata was implicated in the plot. Beyond this he would say nothing, and on the

19th day of the 9th month was crucified, together with his two little innocent boys, aged respectively five and twelve years. Of the others arrested, thirty of the most prominent suffered a similar shameful death at Suzugamori.*

On hearing of the wretched fate which had befallen their generous benefactor, the two women Miyagino and Shinobu left Kamakura and hastened to Suruga. On their arrival at the city of Sumpu they ascertained that the head of their former master, Yui Shōsetsu, was subjected to the disgrace of public exposure, together with the heads of eleven of his followers. An application to the authorities to be allowed to take the head away was refused, on the ground that it was to remain exposed seven days, but that the body would be given up to them if they so desired. These brave and determined women, who had not forgotten their master's past kindness, resolved to abstract from its disgraceful position the head which was more precious to them than anything else in the world, and bury it decently. They succeeded in their design that very night, and reverently interred the head of their benefactor at Abekawa, one *ri* south of Sumpu, or Shizuoka, as the town is now called. Together they took up their residence at Murokuji-chō

* The execution ground during the time of the *Bakufu*, situated between Shinagawa and Ōmori,

JAPAN IN DAYS OF YORE.

her place, so that they could conveniently
live for the rest of their lives over the grave which
contained what was so dear to them.

The Earl of Kii was at first under suspicion of com-
plicity in the plot, on account of the use Shōsetsu had
made of his forged seal; but one of the conspirators
declaring that Shōsetsu had purposely made an alteration
in one of the characters of the seal by which the inno-
cence of the baron could be established, the impressions
of the two seals were closely compared, and the truth of
this confession was confirmed and the loyalty of the Earl
established.

In reward for the energy and promptness which Izu-
no-Kami had shown in discovering and overthrowing the
most extensive plot ever known in Japan, he was re-
warded with an estate producing five thousand *koku* of
rice per annum. The merchants Matabei and Okumura
were requited by receiving an annual pension of three
hundred *koku* of rice each; nor was the service rendered
by the arrow-maker in giving information of what he
knew overlooked: he also received a pension.

THE END.



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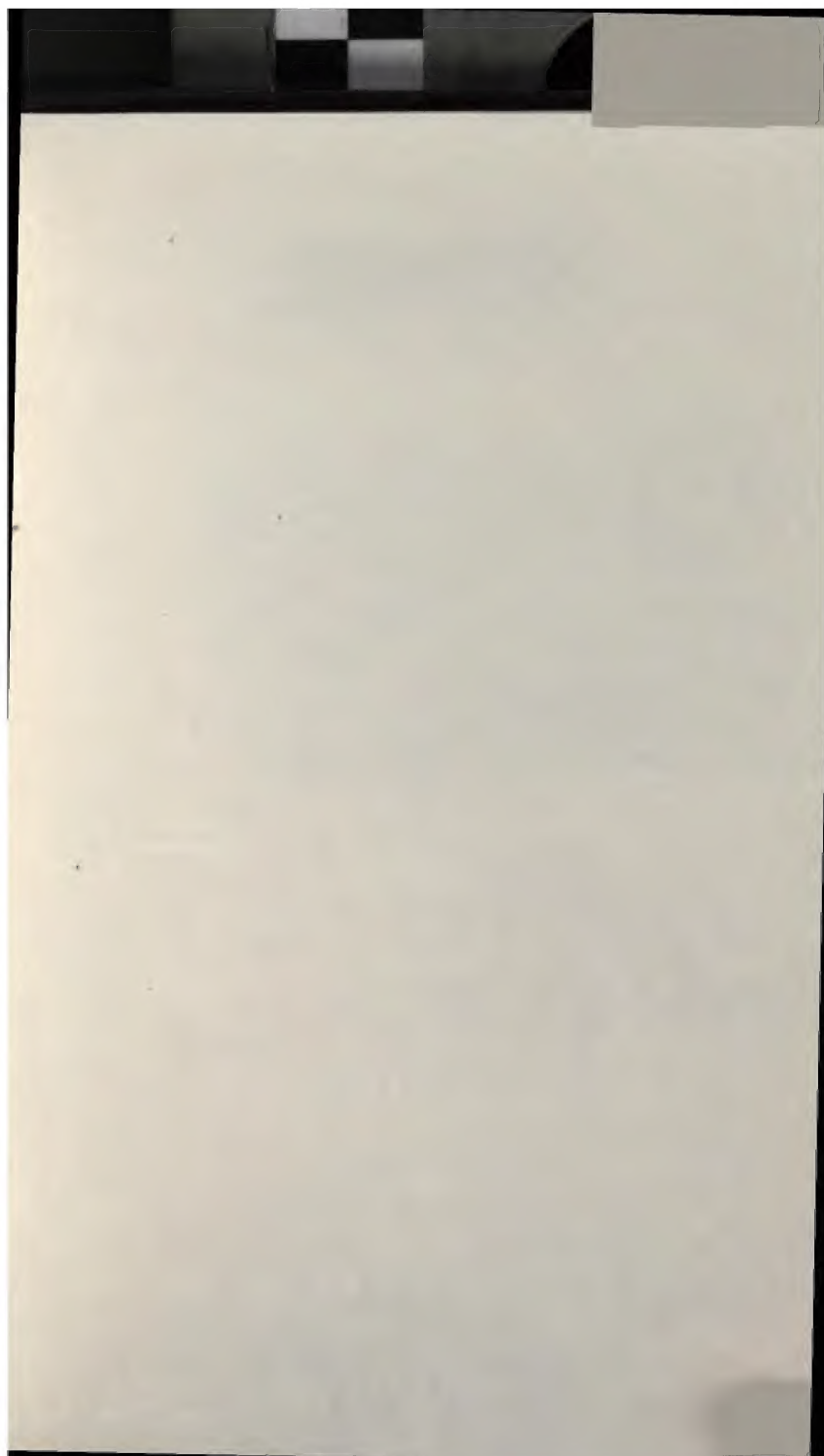
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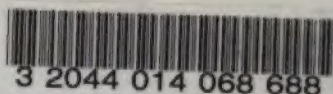
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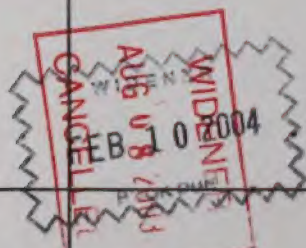




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